

HAIL, CALIFORNIA!



MARY E. OLIVER



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HAIL, CALIFORNIA !
A College Story for Girls



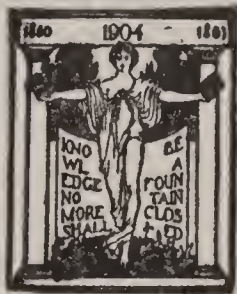
“ARE YOU ALL EXCITED ABOUT THE GAME?”—Page 91.

HAIL, CALIFORNIA!

A College Story for Girls

By
MARY ETHEL OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY
JOHN GOSS



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HAIL, CALIFORNIA !



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HAIL, CALIFORNIA!

CHAPTER I

OFF TO COLLEGE

“MY last gallop on dear old Snow Queen for—goodness knows how long!” sighed Florence Essex, stopping to encircle the white head with her arms before she mounted.

“Don’t stay long,” cautioned her mother, from the doorway. “Remember, to-day is our last chance to do any shopping. Your trunk really should be packed and on its way, right now.”

“I’ll be back soon,” Florence called, waving good-by as the beautiful white horse bore her off.

The familiar road, the leafy coolness of the woods, the clear, rippling creek in the ravine—Florence had always loved them all, and now she was saying good-by. Somehow, the prospect of college, which had shone so brightly all this busy summer, began to lose its luster just then. Florence loved her home; the rose-bowered Spanish cottage set in the wooded foothills of Santa Barbara. She idolized her beautiful mother and the

father whose professional dignity was so sadly upset whenever she entered the room with her gay banter and affectionate teasing. And dear "big brother" Jim was a favorite playmate and comrade. It was going to be hard—hard to leave them all, even for the privilege of entering the university which was Alma Mater to them.

"Queenie, I'm getting homesick before I've even gone. Isn't that ridiculous?" She loosened the rein and set herself to the enjoyment of her gallop.

After a short ten minutes, she turned reluctantly and allowed her mount to walk leisurely toward home. There was shopping to think of now; but even the lure of that favorite pastime failed to bring an expression of cheerfulness to the girl's face; and when Pedro, the big collie, came dashing up the road to meet her, Florence was almost ready to cry. Her mother was in the garden waiting, and the girl forced a happy smile. After all, it *was* nice to be going to college, and she *had* enjoyed her gallop.

"I'll be ready in a jiffy, Mother," she said, alighting quickly. "Jim will put Snow Queen away, and give her a cool bath," she added, eyeing her brother wheedlingly.

"Huh—I thought Snow Queen was strictly your charge!" Jim demurred, but his reluctance was so obviously feigned that Florence's pleading, "Mother and I have to hurry down-town," was quite unnecessary, and she ran toward the house while Jim led the horse away.

In ten minutes, she came out, cool and fresh in a soft, green voile that brought out the coppery glints in her curls.

"Shall I drive, Mother?" she asked, hastily sliding open all the coach windows.

"I'd rather drive down. You may drive back," Mrs. Essex answered, taking her place at the wheel, with a sigh. She, too, was trying to force her thoughts away from the approaching separation.

In spite of the increasing heat, they both enjoyed this last shopping tour. What girl or woman does not like to indulge in the purchase of pretty things? It took Florence all the morning to decide what to buy with the merchandise order that Jim had given her for her birthday, but when she saw the peacock-blue kimono of silk crêpe, with the daintiest of pink and white blossoms sprayed over it, she knew that nothing else would do. Her mother had intended

that a pretty kimono should be a part of the new wardrobe, but she had expected that Florence would be satisfied with a less expensive one.

“It’s Jim’s birthday present, though!” pleaded Florence. “Mother, he *told* me to go and buy something frivolous.”

Mrs. Essex surrendered at last, and Florence insisted on stopping to see the package wrapped and addressed before she could be enticed away to make other purchases. What a delight it was, selecting the delicately tinted ensembles from the piles of lacy, beribboned undergarments, choosing colored slips to be worn under the white lace dress in which she had graduated from the academy, picking up an “extra pretty” handkerchief or scarf here and there,—and greatest of all—deciding upon her first real evening dress!

“It must be more formal than the partified frocks you have been wearing for best,” Mrs. Essex said, almost regretfully. “Gamma Zeta always wears full dress for formal teas and dances.”

The salesgirl overheard her, and immediately opened a case near at hand. “This is just what you want,” she said blithely, holding up a ruffy chiffon of pale green, which shaded gradually

into a darker hue in the last cascade of frills. "It's girlish, and yet formal enough for any occasion."

Florence tried on the little sleeveless frock, and decided that people were right when they told her that green was one of her best colors.

The salesgirl tucked, and pulled, and straightened, here and there, all the while eulogizing her customer's fair skin, hazel eyes, and abundant golden hair. Florence tried on other gowns—simple taffetas, heavy crêpes, fluffy georgettes of various shades, but finally decided that the talkative clerk really had shown taste and judgment when she had brought out the green, ruffled chiffon. The shoppers saw it packed and addressed and, gathering up the smaller packages, hurried out to the machine.

"These things are so lovely just to *look* at," Florence sighed. "It seems a shame to muss them up wearing them."

"The green dress looks lovelier on than off," laughed her mother. "I'll let you have my emerald ring to wear with it—if you're a very good child."

"Oh, you darling Mother! I'll be positively angelic, from this moment."

"Until the next," Mrs. Essex teased.

The parcels from the store arrived that afternoon, and before the day was over, Florence's trunk was ready for shipment.

"I'll carry the fluffiest things in my suitcase," she decided. "Isn't it a shame to have to crush them with packing? Oh, such pretties! Mother, I'm an awfully lucky girl."

"You *are* a great deal more fortunate than many of the girls you'll meet in Berkeley," Mrs. Essex answered solemnly.

"I know it. Think! I don't even have to hunt for a room. Sometimes, though, I wish that I had no claim on Gamma Zeta, Mother. It would be such fun to be 'rushed' in the usual way, instead of being wished on a sorority just because my mother happened to be a member."

Mrs. Essex smiled. "You vain little thing! You would like to see how many sororities would rush you, wouldn't you?" but she added seriously, "You mustn't go there with the idea that you are being 'wished on' them. You had your share of rushing when you stopped at the house with me, last spring. It was quite evident that the girls thought they could stand having you about."

"Just the same, it would be much more flattering to be selected from the multitude, as you were. I guess I *am* a vain little thing. However, it's nice to feel that I won't be a lost, lonesome Freshman when I get to Berkeley."

"For which I'm duly thankful, too," her mother added. "I wouldn't pack those dresses until the last minute, if I were you," she broke off.

"But do you think I'll have time to-morrow? We'll have to start rather early."

"I'll attend to them while you're dressing. Are you still sure that you would rather drive to Los Angeles and go by boat, than take the train to Berkeley from here?"

"Sure as ever," Florence answered emphatically. "I haven't had a peek at Los Angeles for a long, long time; and besides, the train is so stuffy, these hot days."

"All right. It will be a novel experience for you. You've never traveled on anything bigger than a ferry-boat, have you?"

"No, never had a fair chance to get seasick," Florence laughed.—"Now I think everything is in, except the dresses."

"Here comes the man for your trunk!" Jim

called, from the entry. "Do you want him to take this box of books, too?"

"Yes," Florence answered, and ran down to superintend the first definite reminder of departure.

By eight o'clock the next morning, Florence and her baggage were tucked in the back seat of the machine with her mother, while Jim and Dr. Essex occupied the front. She gave a last, tearful glance about the shaded lawn and the dear home, under its garland of late roses,—at beautiful Snow Queen, thrusting her head out of the stable window to give her loved mistress a parting neigh, at Pedro, barking and whining a protest at being left behind. She waved to Minna, the old Indian woman who was their only servant. When the machine slid rapidly out into the highway, she strained her eyes to take in a last glimpse of the home which had sheltered her ever since the days of her first, wavering footsteps.

Her mother slipped an arm about her. "You will be back again in a few months, dear. And time flies, when you are at college."

Florence laid her head on her mother's shoul-

der. Just then, she did not care whether or not she ever saw college. But it was impossible to be morose long, during that memorable trip along the shore of the sparkling Pacific, and up over the foothills toward Los Angeles.

They had a late lunch in the southern city, and had barely time for a drive about town before they must make the short run to San Pedro and put Florence aboard the boat. There were flowers and magazines in her stateroom already, boxes of candy, and notes from girls whom she had known at the academy.

“It’s too bad that you are the only one of your class going up to U. C.,” Jim commented. “It would be more fun to go in a crowd.”

“There *is* one girl, Sadie Erna; but I never knew her very well. Perhaps I’ll meet her, though I don’t imagine she is going by boat.”

She looked about the groups on the deck, but recognized no one until Jim suddenly caught her arm.

“Say, there’s Bob Arclift and his cousin. They look as though they are bound for college, too.” He piloted Florence to the couple who were standing apart from the groups of students and other passengers.

“Are you a Freshman, too, Florence Essex? Oh, isn’t that great!” Betty Arclift exclaimed, as soon as the greetings were over. “My cousin is a Sophomore, and he’s doing his best to scare me into staying at home.”

“Nothing of the sort;—just shattering as many as I can of your Freshman illusions. That’s the duty of a Sophomore,” Robert protested solemnly.

“I’ve heard that the favorite pastime of Sophomores is exterminating unruly Freshmen,” Florence laughed.

“So ’tis,” Robert agreed, assuming as stern an expression as his boyish countenance would permit. “Be sure you heed the various warnings posted about the campus.”

“Isn’t he dreadful?” Betty sighed, although she was obviously enjoying the teasing of her mischievous cousin. “I’m so glad that you’re a Freshman, too, Florence.”

Jim pinched his sister’s ear playfully, and whispered, “Now smile your hardest,” as the warning whistle blew, and he led her back to the group waiting to bid her good-by. There were tears mixed with their last smiles and embraces, hurried promises, and admonitions; and then her

three loved ones hastened off the boat and stood waving while the great ship cleared its moorings and slipped out into the harbor.

It was the first time that Florence had ever left home alone. When the land began to melt away into the mists, she fled to her stateroom, and would not stir out of it until Betty, whose pleading brown eyes knew how to beg so irresistibly, came to take her to the dining-saloon.

Florence had always liked the Arclifts. Both had the same attractive brown eyes and sleek, dark hair; both, the same gay youthfulness of manner and expression. One would have thought them brother and sister; the way in which Robert teased and chaffed his young cousin reminded Florence of her own brother.

"Can you imagine that little bit of a thing running a tractor?" he asked, when the three were walking up and down the deck together, after dinner. "She's determined to be a lady agriculturist, or rancherette, or whatever you call it."

"You won't have to imagine it very long. Some day you'll see how well I can manage a tractor, or a cow or pig, or anything else that grows on a ranch," Betty retorted.

“Ho, ho!” laughed Robert. “What kind of plant do tractors grow on?”

“I was referring to the cow and pig, when I said ‘anything else that grows on a ranch,’” Betty returned saucily, with a shake of her dark, bobbed locks.

“I wish *I* could decide what I want to be,” Florence said. “I haven’t a ghost of idea what I’m going to do with a college education.”

“Plenty of time to think about that,” Robert advised. “Don’t let Betty’s apparent decisiveness make you envious. She thinks that she is going to collect prize specimens of cows and pigs, but she’ll be much more likely to collect Haviland china to put in a tea-shop where over-worked co-eds may congregate.”

Florence laughed. It was easier to imagine Betty handling Haviland china than tending livestock, but there was a determined lift to her rounded chin that made one wonder if she would easily change her mind, once she had it made up.

They walked about the deck until all three were tired enough to seek their staterooms, and Florence bade her friends good-night, smiling gratefully for the hours of cheery companionship.

CHAPTER II

BEGINNINGS

FLORENCE was not disappointed at her failure to experience that bane of the ocean traveler—seasickness. She rose next morning with a keen appetite for breakfast, and went out on deck to pass a half-hour watching the rocky shore-line rise out of the mists. Betty and Robert joined her shortly and, at the first clang of the breakfast gong, they turned toward the dining-room, to eat together while they watched other passengers, and listened to student chatter anent courses and campus affairs.

“It’s beginning to be ‘colleggy’ already,” Florence thrilled. “Are you as impatient as I, I wonder, Betty Arclift?”

“Every bit, if not more so,” Betty answered. “You know, I’ve arrived in Berkeley already.”

At Florence’s look of surprise and perplexity, Robert took it upon himself to explain. “She makes herself about as clear as mud, doesn’t she? What the young lady means to say is that we were in Berkeley a week ago, on our way south.

We live up in the mountains now, you see—the Sierras.”

“Oh! Then your home isn’t in Los Angeles?”

“Not any more. We were just visiting relatives for a few days.”

“We’ve moved up to Snow City,” added Betty. “Ever been there? It’s a quaint little mining town with a history like a wild-west story.”

“And *does* it snow there?”

“’Deed it does. Why, one year, it snowed in May, after all the fruit-trees were in bloom.”

“What a shame! And yet, it must have been beautiful, with all the pink and white blossom faces peeping out from under the snow.”

“Now, don’t get poetical,” cautioned Robert. “Betty associates fruit blossoms only with crops, I assure you.”

Betty gave him a glance that sent him into an attitude of defense, and she turned toward Florence to effect an exchange of invitations for visits in the future.

Some time before the ship was to dock, they hastened to their staterooms to pack, that they might be on deck in time to enjoy their entrance to the Golden Gate. Ruffled, green water stretching away on one side to rugged mountain peaks,

and on the other to a line of cliffs dotted with beautiful homes and the dense woods of the Presidio, soaring sea-gulls balancing themselves gracefully in the breeze,—it was an unforgettable picture, and needed only that glance toward the mainland, where the white bell-tower of their university shone, to make it perfect.

As the *Harvard* rounded the bend and turned into the bay toward its dock, there was a general awakening to the practical business of landing.

“Had you planned on going through to Berkeley?” Betty asked, when they met on the deck again, after having attended to suitcases and other baggage. “Rob and I are going to run up Market Street to do some shopping. Do you want to check your suitcase and come along? Or are you too tired?”

“I’d love to,” agreed Florence gratefully, “if there is no one to meet me.”

They glanced out over the crowd as they walked ashore. Two girls separated from the rest and hurried toward Florence. One she recognized as Jerry Fay, a Gamma Zeta Sophomore who was from Missouri, “actually and figuratively,” as she liked to state it herself. The other was a stranger.

There was a babel of greeting and introduction, amid which Betty and her cousin slipped away before Florence could protest.

“Marceil Adams is what we call a ‘Christmas Freshman,’ ” explained Jerry, “which means she entered college in January, has the same numerals as I, but receives her diploma at the same time as you do. She came all the way from Boston last winter to get thawed out, though, of course, she won’t admit it.”

“And what about Middle West people coming to California to get thawed out?” retorted Marceil. “Anyhow, we don’t have to have a fire in the middle of August, as you do in San Francisco.”

“Only sometimes,” defended Florence.

Jerry smiled with satisfaction. “Go to it, children. I knew that it wouldn’t take much to start an Easterner and a native daughter on the age-old battle.”

“You deliberately led us into it, you rogue,” laughed Marceil, and refused to be led any further.

“I’m not worrying,” Jerry remarked, as they went aboard a trans-bay ferry. “I can foresee that you are going to keep warm arguing about

the superiority of New England apples, while Florence will make it her business to see you, every rainy day, so that she can assure you how 'unusual' the weather is."

The representatives of East and West smiled at Jerry's nonsense, and proceeded to pave the way for the prophesied battles with the beginning of a sound friendship.

"You entered the University last January?" Florence asked. "Then, why didn't I meet you when I was here in May?"

"I was on my way home then," explained Marceil.

"Yes, she was the homesickest Freshman in the whole United States," Jerry added. "I don't believe she is over it yet; in fact, I marvel that she came back to us at all. Just you wait, Florence Essex. When she gets a spell of longing for autumn leaves or icicles, you'll have the time of your life defending the glory of the Golden State."

"Don't mind her. She's just trying to get us started again," smiled Marceil calmly.

When they finally stepped off the Berkeley car and walked toward the Gamma Zeta House, College Avenue was thronging with student life, and

the new Freshman exulted in the fact that, this time, she was not merely an observer, but "a part of the play" herself. With a new sense of possession, she glanced toward the gardens and white buildings of the campus.

The Gamma Zeta House was a large, brown-shingled one, with a spacious lawn and clambering vines that reminded her of home. Mrs. Preston, the house-mother, was at the door to greet Florence and take her to her room.

"Not many of the girls have come yet," explained Mother Preston, slipping an arm about her new charge as they went upstairs together. "Old students do not register until Monday, you know; but there are three here—Jerry and Marceil, who came early for the excitement of Freshman registration, and one Senior, who is an Advisor."

"And this is my very own room?" enthused Florence, as they entered a sunny chamber on the second floor.

"Yes, but you will probably share it with another Freshman who will come in later. Now, you have some time before dinner to rest or get a little settled. Come down when you hear the campanile chimes." With a friendly smile, Mrs.

Preston left the girl to her newly acquired domain.

Florence looked about the room, a not over-large one, furnished simply in cream color—two dressers, a small bed, a study-table in front of each of the two windows, three chairs,—that was all. The windows were daintily curtained, but they were devoid of drapes, and the room was equally destitute of rugs, pictures, and all the other knickknacks that make it a girl's home. But Florence's momentary disappointment was lost in her contemplation of the fun it would be to plan and arrange the needed rugs, pictures, and other homey details.

"If I have a room-mate, it will be easier," she reflected, setting to work upon her suitcase.

She hung the precious new dresses in the closet, and, when Jerry and Marceil came in to help, it was an easy matter to have everything put away before their stream of chatter was interrupted by the sudden pealing of the chimes, celebrating the sunset hour with a burst of bell music.

To the accompaniment of "I Love You, California," the three went downstairs to dinner, during which Jerry kept up a rapid-fire of nonsense

that made it impossible to think of homesickness, even amid the eery emptiness of the big house.

Florence was the first down to breakfast the next morning, and had her trunk half unpacked before Jerry poked her head inside her door to ask:

“Would any little Frosh care to have the guidance of a venerable Sophomore, this morning?”

“*Little* Frosh,” Mrs. Preston protested. “Florence outranks you by at least two inches.”

“Yes, but what I lack in height, I make up in other ways. *Would* the tiny Freshman like to go over to the campus, this morning?”

Florence recalled the lonesomeness of the empty rooms, and the fact that Ruth Lincoln had advised her to register early, and so she eagerly consented.

“You don’t need a hat,” Geraldine advised. “Wear your natural halo; it’s becoming to a Freshman. Marss, are you coming, too?”

“Sorry,” came in a muffled voice from Marceil’s room, “but if I don’t get some order out of this chaos, we’ll have to sleep on the roof, tonight.”

“Leave my part; I’ll do it after lunch,” Jerry called back, as she and Florence left the house.

They were soon treading the paths of the campus, passing under groves of tall eucalyptus, through which the white academic buildings glistened in the sun. Florence could not repress a gasp of delight.

“Pray don’t look so inspired and overjoyed,” laughed Jerry. “You must appear quite bored and indifferent, if you don’t want people to know that you’re a Freshman.”

“But I do want people to know that I’m a Freshman. I’m sure I don’t want any numerals but 19—!”

Jerry was promptly subdued. “Terrible,” she sighed, “allowing a Freshman to come back at me that way, the very first day.”

As they neared the library, a pretty girl in cap and gown stood, for a moment, framed in the classic doorway. To the enthusiastic newcomer, she was the symbol of the wonderful life that stretched before her. Here was college at last!

Jerry escorted Florence to a grove where groups of laughing, talking youths and maidens crowded around the tables and benches, or stood in line before the registration desks. Senior

girls in academic gowns flitted about, helping new students through the maze of registration.

"Not many E's signing up now," Jerry observed, with a sigh of satisfaction. They took their places in line, and, before she could realize it, Florence held in her hand the little blue card which definitely stated that she was a student in the University of California.

"Your Graduate Advisor is Miss Kane," commented Jerry, reading over her shoulder. "Good! Ruth Lincoln is a Senior Advisor under her. There she is now!"

Ruth Lincoln wore her cap and gown well. She was tall, with a quiet dignity that befitted the sombre, collegiate garb; but her smile of recognition immediately dismissed the awe with which Florence regarded this new vision of the Gamma Zeta house-president.

"Your Senior Guardian Angel," added Jerry, when, her schedule having been made out by Miss Kane, Florence was officially put under Ruth's charge.

"And don't let any little Sophomore usurp my privileges," cautioned Ruth, but the warning was a smiling one.

"I'll leave her to your tender mercy, right

now, Highness," mocked Jerry. "I must go to inform Professor Marver that he is to have the honor of my presence in his short-story class. You see, there are about three hundred trying to enroll in that class, and I've made up my mind to be one of the chosen thirty," she explained, and hurried away.

"The next thing to do is to get your medical appointment," Ruth decided, "and the line is so long!"

"I won't mind waiting," Florence assured her. "There are so many things to watch."

Everywhere, people were exchanging ecstatic greetings, or sitting absorbed in bulletins and circulars. The air was filled with chatter about hours and units, lectures and professors, vacation news and banter.

"Ruth Lincoln, in a cap and gown!" a passing girl exclaimed. "Behold her awesome dignity!"

Ruth smiled. "Don't humble me before my Freshman. I know she thinks I've worn one all my life."

"Well, honestly," Florence laughingly confessed, "it never occurred to me that you *haven't* always been a stately Senior.

“ I think the Freshman hats are prettiest,” she remarked, when a contingent of Freshmen boys, all wearing gold-banded blue hats, passed by. “ Are those frightful green caps the Sophomores’ ? ”

“ Sh-h-h,” warned Ruth. “ One of them might hear you.”

“ Well, they *are* frightful,” persisted Florence. “ The Senior sombreros are pretty, though. What do the Juniors wear ? ”

“ They have had no distinctive head-dress since the unwieldy ‘ plugs ’ were discarded, years ago,” Ruth explained. “ Look, Florence, don’t you think you ought to do something to help your suffering classmates ? ” Ruth indicated a group near by.

A Freshman boy had climbed a eucalyptus tree, and, clinging desperately to its slippery trunk, was being compelled to sing several verses of “ The Jolly Sophomore.”

“ And here.” Ruth attracted Flo’s attention to a touching proposal scene, in which the lady fair was suspiciously masculine in appearance, despite the improvised ruffles. Florence noted that her classmates seemed to be enjoying the situation as much as their tormentors, and she

could laugh with the rest at their ridiculous antics.

It was mid-afternoon before the many details of registration were attended to, and Jerry appeared from the direction of Wheeler Hall. "Now that the worst is over, can you stand a Gamma Zeta Special?" she inquired.

Ruth excused herself. "I have some other Freshmen to look after," she said, "so I'll let you take Florence down-town for refreshments. A Gamma Zeta Special is a necessary part of her education, too. Run along."

When the girls returned to the campus again, the chairs and tables were deserted, and only the numerous leaflets, flying about, testified to the previous busyness of the day. Florence heaved a happy, tired sigh.

"Well, your first day at college is over," said Jerry. "Sorry or glad?"

"Both," Florence answered. "Sorry—'cause it has been a most wonderful day, and glad ——"

"Because the days to come are going to be even more wonderful," Jerry finished for her.

CHAPTER III

GAMMA ZETA

THE upstairs rooms of the house did not remain quiet for long. By Monday, the rest of the girls had arrived, and there was the usual fall program of rapturous greetings, punctuated by hammers, falling trunk-lids, and a thousand incoherent exclamations and remarks. Like a great many other Freshmen, Florence found her head awlirl with the excitement of rushing about to interviews and appointments, of meeting many new people. After the first lonesome evenings at the house, she had not a minute to think of being homesick, and wrote home long, cheery letters about her new life and friends.

It was fascinating, this membership in a great university, mingling with thousands of students who represented every degree of society, as well as every civilized country in the world. Whenever she had a spare moment, she liked to sit on the steps of the library and watch the streams of students pouring in and out,—happy, carefree youths and girls like herself, businesslike young

men and women who came and went with anxious glances toward the campanile clock, dark-eyed Europeans who seemed to take their studies with the utmost seriousness, almond-eyed sons and daughters of China and Japan, and even an occasional turbaned intellectual from far-away India. Some, poor and shabby, with worried, hunted expressions; some self-conscious, unpoised, their very carriage an apology to the world; some arrogant, disdainful of their associates, others obviously seeking the favor of the "elect"; some listlessly indifferent to their surroundings, others bristling with enthusiastic efficiency; many, like the Freshman who watched them, just average. Here and there, a passing individual stood out from the rest,—the little blind girl whose face was the incarnation of patience and sweetness, the young nobleman in military uniform, the tall, aristocratic girl with the blue-black hair, who always dressed in harmony with the car she was driving, the stocky Freshman who went through the crowd as though he were making a centre rush. It was a little world in itself, with its share of joy and sorrow, humor and tragedy.

On this particular day, Florence was enjoying

a half-hour's respite between enrollment periods, and, though she watched because the study of people was one of her favorite pastimes, she was looking for two definite individuals. Not since she had said good-by at the ferry, had she met the Arclifts. They had neglected to exchange addresses. The files would not be open to the public for, possibly, a fortnight.

In every class, Florence had watched and listened for signs of her two friends, but, so far, she had encountered neither. She wanted to see Betty, most especially. The moment that the Gamma Zeta girls had given her permission to invite any Freshmen girls whom she especially cared for, as her tea-guests, she had thought of Betty. They had formed a fast friendship, dating from that memorable summer in the Yosemite. Florence wanted her sorority sisters to know and approve of Betty. They were giving her an opportunity practically to choose her room-mate, despite the fact that she could not definitely suggest a name for membership, and she loved them for it. She had thought of Betty, and resolved to have her as her special guest at tea, and at other less formal occasions in which the Gamma Zeta girls might have an opportunity

to know her. And now—here she was without an idea how to find Betty. The thought that some other sorority might claim her, before she could be found, worried Florence, and made her all the more desirous of getting in touch with the lost friend. She was certain that there was no one else she would rather have.

The campus clock chimed three and, with a sigh of disappointment, Florence rose to go to her history class in Wheeler Auditorium. A little, round-shouldered figure in a faded gingham dress attracted her attention. There was something familiar about the stoop of those thin shoulders, and the mousy color of the untidy hair. Florence frowned, and then brightened. Of course! It was Sadie Erna, the girl who had “houseworked” her way through Southern Academy. She wondered if Sadie were as aloof as ever, or if she would respond to friendliness, now that she was in a big university where one needed it so much.

She followed Sadie down the corridor of the library and, smiling her sunniest, tapped her on the shoulder. “Hello, Sadie Erna! I’m glad to find that there is some one else from S. A. in all this vast throng.”

It was hard to tell whether Sadie's expression was vexation or extreme timidity. She edged away ever so slightly, and a ghost of a smile flitted across her countenance, but her face hardened suddenly and, with a glance at Florence's tailored broadcloth, she shook off the hand on her arm and sped up the stairs without the barest murmur of greeting.

Florence stood stock-still, angry at first, but she finally shrugged her shoulders and proceeded on her way to the auditorium in the next building. She never had been able to understand Sadie Erna. Of course, the girl was poor and dreadfully overworked, but, to Florence, that was all the more reason why she needed the friendliness that she always rebuffed in that unappreciative way.

She was still thinking of Sadie Erna when the new enrollments were being taken in her History class, but, when the instructor began reading names, her mind immediately became absorbed in listening. The cards were not arranged alphabetically, and so it was some minutes before the name she hoped to hear was read.

"Elizabeth Arclift," he called, and Florence turned her head, whirlwind fashion, from left to

right, in an effort to ascertain from what part of the room that clear-voiced "Present!" came.

Betty was seated up in back, and near the door. She would probably be gone before Florence could get to her. Fortunately, Professor Patton decided that a list of texts and references was more necessary than a lecture, that day, and so Florence's lack of concentration did her no great harm. The class was dismissed twenty minutes early, and she hurried up the aisle until, wedged in by the crowd, she could move no further. There was no use in trying to struggle through; she could only edge her way with the crowd, biting her lips with impatience, and struggling with an absurd temptation to leave the aisle and climb over the backs of the seats toward the door. Naturally, she could not do that, and, by the time she had arrived in the lobby, there was no sign of Betty anywhere. Very much out of patience, Florence walked back to the library and whiled away an hour, looking for the books she needed. She was turning the cards in the index catalogue, when some one touched her arm.

"Hello, Flo Essex, how is everything going?" Florence recognized the voice that she most

wanted to hear, just then, and looked up to bestow an enthusiastic greeting upon Betty.

"Why, I've hunted everywhere for you!" she exclaimed, after they had exchanged excited résumés of their first week in college.

"And I, for you," smiled Betty, "but I knew we must run across each other soon. Are you looking for that 'Logic'?" she asked abruptly. "If you are, you may as well give up, and come for a walk with me, 'cause every one of those Freshmen at the delivery desk is after that same book."

"And I suppose that the last one went out long ago," Florence sighed, pushing in the drawer. "What am I to do? The 'Co-op's' new supply won't be here for ten days or more."

"Borrow mine," Betty offered. "We can study together, until your copy comes."

"Oh, *thank* you, Beth. That will take a load off my mind. I hate to get behind in things, right at the beginning."

"We haven't so much time to walk," Betty remarked, as they came out into the glow of late afternoon, "but we can run up to Big C, if you're not too tired."

"No. A walk is just what I need, right now;

and besides, the air is crystal clear. We ought not to miss such a chance at 'ze world-famous view.' ”

“Have you seen it from the campanile tower?” Betty asked.

“The view? Yes. Went up at noontime yesterday, and watched the chimesmaster play the big bells. It was interesting, but oh, my poor ears!”

“A case of ‘Distance lends enchantment,’ ” laughed Betty.

They set off in the direction of the giant golden C which shone on the sun-bathed hills. Following the road up beyond the Greek Theatre, they turned off into the hard-packed trail leading up over the hill. In a surprisingly short time, they had passed through the scattered groves and come to the end of the crooked path. They stood at the foot of what now appeared to be a slab of yellow rock, curving up over the hillside.

“How huge!” exclaimed Florence. “Looking at it from here, one would never imagine that it had any relation to the alphabet.”

“Another case of ‘Distance lends enchantment,’ ” Betty observed. “But turn around. Here is your view, looking its best for you.”

They stood for a long time, looking down upon the panorama of liquid gold and purple mountains, until the sun disappeared behind a glory of crimson cloud-banks, and gauzy, opalescent mists began to steal over the water. Their attention was called to the campus spread out below them, by the chimes—now sweetened and mel-
lowed by distance.

“They’re playing ‘The End of a Perfect Day,’” sighed Betty, “and—not that I wish to spoil the sentiment or anything—but I think that *might* be interpreted as a hint that we begin to wend our way homeward. Ten cents fine for being late to dinner, at my place!”

“That reminds me. I must get your address,” said Florence, as they hurried down the trail.

Betty tore a leaf from her note-book, and wrote on it the address of one of the large boarding-houses. Florence was relieved. She began to hope that Betty was “heart-whole and fancy free,” as far as sorority membership was concerned, but when they arrived on the campus again, and a group of Alpha girls greeted Betty affectionately, Florence knew that there was to be competition where little Miss Arclift was concerned. She tucked Betty’s brown hand

under her elbow with a gesture of determination.

“Can’t you come over at tea-time to-morrow?” she pleaded. “It’s very informal—come when you can, and stay as long as you want to. If you could stay to dinner, too, we might do Friday’s Logic together, afterwards.”

All unconscious of the fact that she was being invited to the Gamma Zeta House, Betty eagerly consented. Florence left her, liking her better than ever, and hoping that the girls, who had given her the opportunity to introduce her friend, would approve of her choice.

A number of Freshmen girls dropped in for informal tea, that Wednesday afternoon. Betty came, and was eagerly received when it became known that she had been “most ’specially invited” by Florence. Every member of the House seemed anxious to meet her.

“Are you any relation to Robert Arclift?” asked a Senior girl, upon being introduced.

“He is my cousin,” nodded Betty. “And I just know that *you* are Ed Graham’s sister. He and Robert are ——”

“Perfect pals!” supplied Shirley Graham. “I wonder why Ed didn’t tell me that Rob’s

cousin was coming to college?" she frowned, and then hastily changed the subject.

Betty spent a pleasant, chatty half-hour with the girls and finally stole off to Florence's room.

"Most everybody has gone," breathed Florence, "and so they won't mind if I'm not down there right now. Remember you're going to stay to dinner, Betty."

Betty nodded, but she seemed distracted and worried. Several times she started to say something and checked herself.

"Whatever is on your mind?" laughed Florence. "Did you sit on the Senior bench, or walk across the Sophomore lawn, or do anything equally dreadful?"

"N-o," answered Betty, with only a fleeting smile. "It's something I want to know, but haven't any right to ask you," she added, a little wistfully.

"Well, I'm seventeen. I don't mind telling you," Florence volunteered cheerfully. "How old are *you*?"

Betty laughed outright. "The same," she said, "but—that was a poor guess."

"You mean that that wasn't what you wanted to ask me?" Florence saw that Betty really did

have something on her mind, and so she added, "Well, what is it then? Do go ahead and ask. It can't do any harm."

"Are—are you pledged to Gamma Zeta?" Betty stammered at length.

Florence's face sobered. "Not yet," she answered. "I told the girls I'd rather wait until the regular time."

Betty did not seem especially cheered by this bit of news, but she felt that some explanation was necessary.

"The Alpha girls were telling me that you've been over there quite often. I had an idea that you were interested in that House. You see, I didn't know that you were living here."

Florence remembered the way the Alpha girls had greeted Betty, and began to understand. The thought that Betty had been attracted to Alpha Epsilon because she believed her Yosemite friend to be interested in it, explained the timid question. Florence knew now that Betty was as desirous as she that they both "go into" the same sorority; consequently, she was more than ever determined to give Gamma Zeta the opportunity to know Betty. If only she were in a position to suggest her name for membership! But

then, there was little doubt that Betty's name would be mentioned by somebody. Shirley had seemed especially interested in her,—and Shirley was an influential Senior. Her thoughts came back to Betty and the Alphas.

“I *have* been over there a great deal,” she explained. “Some of the Academy girls I knew at school live there, and I've met most of the others, now.” She wrinkled her brow as a startling thought flashed in her mind.

Surely *they* hadn't been “rushing” her! Why, Sybil Marsh and the Quadro girls all knew that she was “as good as pledged” to Gamma Zeta! What would the girls who already looked upon her as a little sister say, if they suspected such a thing? The thought was disconcerting. Florence felt that she must make herself clear regarding her own intentions, even if Betty had already committed herself to Alpha Epsilon.

“My mother was a Gamma Zeta, Betty,” she said earnestly, “and so I have never been particularly interested in any other sorority, even those in which girls that I've known for a long time are members. Why, when I was born, Mother's chapter sent a box of gifts addressed to ‘our youngest sister.’ I have the card yet. So you see, I've

always looked forward to being a Gamma Zeta, some day."

"Of course," Betty nodded. "I didn't know that. You see—(I may as well tell you)—I think that Alpha Epsilon is expecting to pledge me. I rather hoped that you might be pledged at the same time as I. But after all, it doesn't make so very much difference if we're not in the same House. We can see each other often, anyway."

Florence did her best to conceal her disappointment. She forced a smile as she answered cheerily, "Oh, yes. We'll see each other lots,—especially as we have three classes together. There will be intersorority affairs, too."

She tried to comfort herself with this reflection that night, long after Betty had gone and she was alone in her room. But it did not satisfy her. She had imaginatively placed Betty, and no one else, at that other study-table. She had even dared to look forward to the confidential chats and plans that a girl shares only with a congenial room-mate. Florence did not like the task of reconstructing this picture—putting a stranger in the place she had reserved for Betty. She wondered who it would be—that tall, awkward girl whose very bigness made one feel con-

spicuously small? A likable girl, with her frankness and irresistible drollery, but—somehow, Florence could not imagine Margaret Montague in the rôle of room-mate. What others? Surely, not that silly little Violet Chester with the affected lisp, and the gushing demonstrativeness! She was the only one that Florence actually disliked, among all the Freshmen she had met at the House. There were many that were likable enough, but none that she would prefer to Betty.

The two girls managed to be together a great deal, Betty and her books often occupying the study-table that she must so soon give up to another. They strolled over the hills and up into the canyon during the twilight hour just after dinner; they took delightful jaunts of exploration about Berkeley and Oakland.

Florence began to dread the day of the pledge breakfast. The upperclassmen had given her no hint as to the names of the Freshmen who had been invited. She had no idea who her room-mate was to be, and she could not become enthusiastic over the prospect of meeting the girl who would at least partially usurp Betty's place, in the strolls and other comradely pastimes that had brought them together every day.

And so, on that Thursday morning to which she had been looking forward for so many years, Florence's happiness was mixed with a feeling of disappointment, as she donned her white frock. She could not help thinking of Betty—who was probably on her way to the Alpha House now. Again and again, she wished that the girls had told her whom she might expect to have as her companions in this morning's ceremony. Some one knocked at her door, just as she finished dressing.

"Come in!" she called. "I'm ready. Have all the other girls come?"

Ruth Lincoln looked in, smiling. "Yes, every one we expected is here," she said happily. "I've sent the other girls to their rooms. May I send your prospective room-mate in here to take off her wraps?"

Florence swallowed, but she managed to smile. She had not expected the dreaded moment to come so soon. How she hoped for some one she could like!

There was some commotion and laughter out in the hall. Florence thought that Ruth would *never* return. She stood looking toward the hall with a frozen smile on her face, when the door

opened again, and a little, white-clad figure stood there, her face turned away as she answered some laughing remark from the outside. But Florence knew that dark head, that rounded profile.

“Betty!” she almost screamed her delight. “Betty! You don’t mean to tell me that it’s really you!”

They rushed into each other’s arms as though they had just met, after years of separation.

“Yes it’s me, I—*moi!* Flo, you don’t know how jealous I’ve been of—of myself, as it turns out. I was mortified, every time I thought of the room-mate who was going to share your after-dinner walks, and I hated the thought of having to get acquainted with one myself—a room-mate, I mean. Then the Gamma Zeta bid came!”

“Your grammar’s dreadfully mixed,” Florence laughed, “but I know what you mean, you old dear. I’ve been doing some worrying, myself. Nobody gave me the slightest hint as to what girls received bids.”

They laughed and talked and exclaimed happily until some one opened the door and quieted them with a solemn “Hush, the music is beginning. Hurry, and get into your places.”

"And what about the Alphas?" Florence whispered, before they slipped into the hall.

"They understood," Betty answered. "They knew that we two wanted to be together; and just as soon as they knew definitely that they couldn't have you, they decided that they would have to let Gamma Zeta have me. They were fine about it, really."

Soft violin music floated up from downstairs, and Betty and Florence quietly took their places with the other three girls who were to pledge their fidelity to Gamma Zeta.

An hour or so later, they walked to the campus together, and as Florence glanced from her pledge-pin to the duplicate on Betty's blouse, she laughed away the bugaboo which had haunted her for days. Jolly, companionable Betty had routed the spectre of the uncongenial room-mate, and there was nothing left to mar the perfection of the beautiful memory that had become hers that morning.

CHAPTER IV

ROOM-MATES

"MY stars! What's happening?" gasped Ruth, after an almost disastrous collision with a huge pile of books, behind which she discovered Florence.

"Moving day! See what a learned person you are importing from College Hall. All these belong to Betty."

Ruth chuckled. "An obedient person, too! We told her to be moved in by to-night, and she is certainly taking it seriously."

Florence toiled up the stairs with the books, and Betty followed with a couple of suitcases. In a surprisingly short time, they had completed the transformation of the bare little place into a cozy room, of which any co-ed might be proud. The peach-colored drapes and bedspread in which Florence had indulged, half fearing that the prospective room-mate would not care for them, blended beautifully with the warm-toned rugs and cushions which Betty had brought. A little book-shelf donated by Mrs. Preston, and some

tastefully arranged water-colors and prints, gave the last touch of artistic harmony to the little domain.

“Even the blue-and-gold California pennant, and the sorority colors seem to belong here,” commented Mrs. Preston, after the other members of the house had stopped to admire.

“I’m afraid that these Freshmen have a prettier room than any other in the house,” worried Ruth Lincoln. “Girls, we’ll all have to get busy and do ours over.”

“Not right now,” objected Jerry Fay. “Me-thinks I hear the welcome song of the dinner gong. I’m interested in personally decorating a certain room downstairs for the next half-hour or so.”

Florence and Betty could not resist the impulse to stay behind just a minute, to admire the result of their work.

“Those drapes are perfect, Flo—like sunshine coming in the window.”

“I like that sunny color, too,” admitted Florence. “And I’m so pleased that your things fit in well. One would think that those brown and gold rugs and your California cushions were made especially to match my drapes and prints.”

“Yes, a decidedly harmonious room.” It was Miriam Byrne who poked her head in to say this, “and most decidedly harmonious room-mates, too,” she added, as, summoned by a second imperious call from the dinner gong, they hurried downstairs together.

The new Freshmen were welcomed affectionately. Besides Betty, there was Margaret Montague, tall, and a bit awkward, but with an unconscious drollery in her slow ways that made her quite likable. She was to room with Irish Miriam Byrne, whose quick wit was already proving a match for Jerry’s, and whose bright auburn hair gave warning of the fiery spirit that lay under all her humor.

“With four Freshmen in the house, we ought to have efficient ’phone and doorbell service,” commented a Sophomore, wagging her head as a mode of impressing the newcomers with what was expected of them.

“Oh, *you’re* the one who is always getting her callers mixed,” Miriam exclaimed. “If you like, I’ll keep track of the ones that ask for you, so that you won’t make any more than four engagements for any particular occasion.”

The Sophomore blushing subsided, and Jerry

came to the rescue of her classmate. "Better be careful, children," she warned. "Some day you may have to go through a mock initiation, you know. And *then* you'll pay for every time you forget the majesty of a Sophomore."

"Is Marceil a Sophomore?" inquired Florence, suddenly remembering several occasions when she had most decidedly forgotten the majesty of that particular individual.

"Not yet, but she will be in January,—and she wears the same numerals as I," Jerry added loyally.

"Which means she is sort of semi-majestic?" asked Florence, dimpling.

"That expresses it exactly," Jerry nodded. "Next time you want to tease Marss about the 'lahst ahftehnoon she spent at Hahvahd University,' you get my permission first.—By the way, Marceil, when are you going to get that bottle of 'stickum' for your hair? It's a sin for a Bostonian to have such curly hair. Flo Essex is a native daughter, and, therefore, has a perfect right to Pickfordian tresses, but you,—a history student from Boston—it's terrible! And you ought to wear shell-rimmed glasses, too. Mother Preston, don't you think they would make

Marss look a lot more studious and—and—historical?”

“If any charge of mine begins to look historical at eighteen, I’ll disown her,” laughed Mrs. Preston, rising from the table, thus signaling for dispersion and an end to Jerry’s teasing.

“Are we going to have our walk to-night?” Betty asked, when she and Florence were again in their own room.

“Why not? It is only seven o’clock. You aren’t overloaded with studying already, are you?”

“No, but I thought that you might believe we ought not to take the time, now that regular work has begun.”

“Nonsense! It will be much better for us to go out and get a breath of fresh air, than to sit down and study, right after dinner,” Florence argued, with an emphatic nod of her head.

“My sentiments, exactly,” rejoiced Betty. “We *are* harmonious room-mates, Flo.”

They went out together, after having left word with Mrs. Preston.

“Speaking of harmonious room-mates,” began Florence, as they turned toward the canyon road, “I wonder what made Miriam say that. Is she

afraid that her friendship with Margaret is going to be endangered by their living together?"

"Hm-m-mm, I don't think so," mused Betty. "Most any one can get along with Margaret. She is too placid to be ruffled by anything."

"Yes, and so irresistibly funny," added Florence. "Still, they are very different—Margaret, so slow and calm, and Miriam, so quick and impetuous."

Betty laughed. "Perhaps that's why they were put together,—so that they would sort of balance each other."

They grew quiet under the spell of twilight in the grove, and turned to look down between tall trunks of eucalyptus at the campus, asparkle with lights, and at the glowing entrance of the library, darkened now and then by ingoing students.

"A gentle reminder that our seats and a volume or two of history await us in the 'libe,'" sighed Betty, but they walked with willing steps toward the *mêlée* of student life that they both loved.

Stopping at the house only long enough to procure their note-books, they joined the groups of students who were hurrying toward the campus.

They found seats in the Reserved Book Room of the library, and settled themselves for an evening of study. Florence was soon absorbed in a chapter on prehistoric man, but Betty was restless. She fidgeted and stared about, drew pictures in her note-book.

“Beth dear, there’s an hour time-limit on that book. You’d better make the most of it,” Florence hinted at last.

Betty applied herself for about ten minutes, and then looked about the room again, nodded a greeting to two Alpha girls across the table, smiled at other friends who glanced up from tables farther away. She sat very still for a minute or so, and Florence looked up to see her gazing straight ahead, frowning.

“Flo, do *you* know that girl at this end of the second table away?” Betty whispered. “Every time I look at her she is staring at us with the queerest expression on her face!”

Florence immediately recognized the mousy hair and wan face that had characterized Sadie Erna as long as she had known her. Sadie’s eyes were downcast now. She was apparently absorbed in her work.

“Yes, I know her,” whispered Florence. “She

graduated from the Academy in my class, though she never mingled with us much. What do you mean by 'a queer expression'?" she ended.

"Oh—I don't know. She'd look at you and then at me, as though she had some grudge against us. It must be you, Flo," Betty giggled. "I don't remember ever having seen her before. Whatever did you do to her?"

Florence was startled. "A grudge against me! She can't have! Why, she used to rather like me, whenever we did come in contact with each other at school. She was always terribly shy and reserved. Her outside work kept her well occupied; but, once in a while, we'd meet and exchange a few words. I hardly think she has any grudge against me."

"Maybe I imagined it," said Betty. "Perhaps it was a math. problem that made her appear so pouty. Heavens, look at the time! And I'm not half-way through this chapter."

Florence was the restless one during the next fifteen minutes. She often glanced toward Sadie Erna, but the girl did not raise her eyes. Even when she rose to go, she refrained from looking in Florence's direction, but Florence was not surprised. She had seen Sadie go out of her way to

avoid her before, and, remembering their first meeting on the campus, she thought she understood. Florence resented the idea that Sadie thought her patronizing. To her, condescension was a form of snobbery. She hated both, and it bothered her to think that any one might interpret her interest in Sadie Erna as such, especially that Sadie herself should do so. It was obvious that, at a great university where they seldom saw each other, their paths must rapidly diverge; but Florence saw no reason why their casual friendliness should be destroyed. She recalled that she had never seen Sadie in company with any one else—always alone, always hurrying, as if fleeing from something she dreaded.

When the warning bell rang at five minutes of ten, Florence was still absorbed in her contemplation of the problems of student life. She automatically closed the book on prehistoric man, vaguely wondering why it was that she no longer resented having come to Berkeley without the little coupé, and the beautiful white horse, both of which had been so much a part of her life at Southern Academy.

“Did you finish the assignment?” With this question, Betty brought her back to earth, and

Florence ruefully gazed at her incomplete notes.

“Guess I’ll have to breakfast early, and come over at eight o’clock to-morrow,” she sighed. “I’ve been dreaming.”

“And the way some people drop hints about time-limits, and so on!” Betty teased, as they turned in their books; but Florence was not perturbed, for, in her mind, had sprung up a vigorous resolution to help Sadie Erna, in spite of herself.

“It’s only quarter after ten,” observed Betty, when they were back in their room. “Let’s make some chocolate before we seek our downy couches.”

“Good! I was going to suggest that we stop down-town, if it hadn’t been so late.”

In the light of their cosy room, Florence forgot the problems that were perplexing her, and promptly assumed her characteristic cheerfulness.

“Oh, Betty, there’s only one wee cracker between the two of us!” she wailed dolorously.

Betty looked up from the chafing-dish and frowned. “I hate to drink chocolate alone,” she

said, "but, as visiting the pantry is against house-rules, we'll have to, I guess."

Florence glanced at the clock. "Ten-twenty, —I can run out and get some, while you heat the water. There's a little store down the block."

"House-door is locked at ten-thirty, week-nights," Betty reminded her. "Can you be back in nine minutes? I'd hate to have you brought up before Senior Control just for the sake of a few crackers."

"Nonsense! I'll be back in *three* minutes," Florence assured her, and ran softly down the stairs.

The little variety shop on the corner catered to just such errands as Florence's. Cookies and fruit occupied one side of the place, while, on the other, a small soda-fountain jostled for space with miscellaneous odds and ends of stationery, pencils, and note-books. Despite the hour, the store was crowded with home-going students, stopping for various articles that they had forgotten to procure down-town. Florence nervously glanced at the clock and watched the minute hand creep slowly toward the half-hour, while she waited for a fussy customer to decide what kind of pencil he wanted.

Twenty-five past! She looked over the assortment of crackers and cookies longingly, and sighed at the number of people who must be waited on before her turn came. Four minutes more! Three! Old Mr. Blake was moving as fast as his rheumatic limbs would permit him. At twenty-eight minutes past ten, Florence began to wonder if those crackers were worth a reprimand from the Senior Control Committee. Mr. Blake saw that she was in a hurry, and called some one from within. Sadie Erna! The old man indicated Florence, and Sadie came forward with evident reluctance, her face as unsmilingly indifferent as though she were approaching a total stranger. Florence greeted her pleasantly, and showed her what she wanted.

"Do you live with the Blakes, Sadie?" she asked interestedly. "If you do, we're neighbors, for I'm only just around the block."

"No, I don't live here," Sadie answered. "I just work for Mrs. Blake, and help a little in the store."

Florence noted that she avoided stating where she did live, and so refrained from asking.

"I suppose you are at some sorority house?" Sadie hinted.

“At the Gamma Zeta,” Florence nodded, trying to steal a look at Sadie’s face as she turned away. She wondered why the girl took so long to do up a package of crackers, and tapped the counter nervously while the clock ticked precious seconds away. To be sure, a few moment’s tardiness was no great crime, but the house-door was regularly locked at ten-thirty. After that, it was necessary to ring the bell and be admitted by a Senior proctor who would probably not be lenient toward a newly-pledged Freshman, even if the offense were only a matter of minutes. Florence had no desire to face the cold disapproval of an upperclassman, any more than she wanted to break the trust which all the Gamma Zeta girls had in her and in each other.

“Could you hurry a little, please, Sadie?” she begged. “This clock says ten-thirty. I really should be back in my room, right now.”

Sadie had broken one paper bag and was transferring the purchase to another, with aggravating slowness. She did not reply to Florence’s plea, but continued her task, tying the package with painstaking care and deliberation. It was a full five minutes after ten-thirty when she counted the change into Florence’s hand.

Florence sped out and up the street, worried and vexed. She wondered if Sadie were really as stupid as she appeared to be to-night, or if, as Betty had hinted, the girl was feeling "pouty" over something.

Her heart beat rapidly when she at last gained the doorway and tried the door with trembling fingers. It gave! She entered the lighted hall with a sigh of relief. Upstairs she heard low voices—Betty's and Mother Preston's. She tip-toed up and faced them inquiringly. They were both smiling, but Mrs. Preston turned toward Florence with a frown.

"You look frightened, Girlie. Has something happened?"

"No, but I thought something was going to. I'm five minutes late, Mother Preston,—even if Betty did keep you from locking the door on time," she added, twinkling.

Mrs. Preston smiled. "Is that all? Well, five minutes isn't so dreadful, especially when I know where you are. Just the same, girls, I'd be pretty careful about the ten-thirty rule, if I were you. You know, the Seniors aren't so tolerant toward Freshmen as I am."

It was said kindly, yet it made Florence under-

stand the seriousness of infringing a house-rule, however trivial it might seem ; and she was grateful to the loyal room-mate whose explanation had saved her the embarrassment of being locked out.

“I’d have been back in time if Mr. Blake had waited on me,” Florence observed later, when they were comfortably sipping chocolate and munching crackers. “But Sadie Erna was working there, and she was so slow!”

Betty smothered an exclamation. “Next time we want crackers at 10:21 P. M., we’ll send Miriam,” she giggled. “You’re too polite to get quick service.”

Florence knew that that was not what Betty had intended to say, and she wondered at the meaning of that smothered cry. But it was eleven o’clock, the signal for “lights out,” and there was no more time to talk. Drawing their kimonos about them, they pattered out to the sleeping-porch, and said good-night without any further allusion to the incident.

CHAPTER V

THE "HOMESICKEST FRESHMAN"

IT was the day of the traditional Pajamarino Rally. All afternoon, Freshmen boys had been toiling to add to the piles of boxes, barrels, old furniture, and other miscellaneous scraps of wood which were to be sacrificed to the torch of the merrymakers in the Greek theatre. Songs and cheers broke out in the most sedate classes, and the spirit of carnival hovered over all Berkeley.

Florence, exhilarated with the spirit of loyalty already strong in her, sped up the stairs of the chapter-house merrily singing,

"A Californian, through and through,
Our totem, he, the Golden Bear."

She was still humming lightly, as she quickly changed from her riding-habit to the warm suit she generally wore for chill evenings in the Greek Theatre.

"Not that I expect to suffer from the cold with that immense bonfire going," she told herself, "but it will be doubly cool after the fire

goes out. Oh bother! I forgot to get any hair-pins. Wonder if Marceil has any extras,"—Marceil being the only other long-haired girl in the house.

Florence knocked at her door, but there was no answer. She was about to turn away when she heard a sound within, and listened. Some one was sobbing bitterly. Florence hesitated uncertainly, but the impulse to help finally overcame her. She opened the door softly, and her own eyes dimmed at sight of Marceil's convulsive shoulders.

"Why Marss, dear! What is the matter? Can't I help, or would you rather I went away?"

There was no answer, and Florence knelt down beside the couch to put her arms about the quivering figure, murmuring sympathetically until Marceil grew quieter.

Marceil threw back her head suddenly, and stammered, "Oh, I know I'm foolish; b-but—I can't help it. Flo,—your—your song was the last straw. If I hear another word about California, I'll go crazy!"

Florence's eyes flew open with startled surprise. "What? I don't understand," she faltered. "You—you're *in* California, aren't you?"

"Yes, and I'd give anything if I were three thousand miles away. Oh—sometimes I just can't bear it—this everlasting 'blue skies and sunshine,' and I'm so tired of palm-trees and eucalyptus groves! I—I'd give a fortune to be hiking through the Maine woods, right now."

Marceil was tearfully vehement, but Florence's first fright had melted away into sympathy, a bit tinged with amusement.

"Oh-h-h," she breathed, recalling Jerry's characterization of Marceil, the first day they had met. She remembered how she had cured her own attack of homesickness by forcing her mind away from the things that tantalized her, and resolved to try the same method with Marceil.

"It must be gorgeous back East, about this time," she began, diplomatically. "I'd love to ride through a fiery autumn wood myself. Did you ride much, Marss?"

"No, I never learned, but I used to walk a good deal; and I miss our good times, so!"

"Ever join the hiking club here?" Florence asked, determined to bring her mind back to California.

"No. I tell you I hate walking over dusty roads and bare hills for no reason at all except

just to be walking. And California isn't New England—that's all there is to it!"

"No—of course East and West are very different," conceded Florence.—"I had a nice ride up along Wildcat Canyon, this evening," she broke off, forsaking the rôle of sympathy for one of matter-of-fact chattiness. "The place is just alive with wild-flowers,—columbine, wild aster, ivy,—more kinds than I know,—and the woods are dense with blossoms and foliage."

Marceil looked slightly interested. "I didn't know there were any pretty woods near here. I never saw anything but bare, brown hills."

"Come with us next time. The Riding Club finds all the attractive spots around Berkeley."

"But I can't ride."

"You can learn. There are other beginners."

"Isn't it hard and scary at first?"

Florence smiled and launched into an enthusiastic dissertation on one of her favorite pastimes. By the time that the dinner gong rang, Marceil was almost cheerful.

"Goodness!" Florence exclaimed. "Hurry and bathe your eyes and put your dress on. Are you going to wear your serge to the rally?"

"I'm not going to the rally," Marceil pouted,

becoming dejected again. "I tell you I don't want to be reminded that I'm way off in California. I'm going to stay here and write letters home."

"And they'll be as blue as indigo," Florence added. "No sir, you're going to spare your folks, and come and be scorched by the bonfire."

She helped Marceil into her dress and accompanied her, still protesting, down to the dining-room where the "Christmas Freshman" maintained a tearful silence, in spite of the sympathetic efforts of the other girls. But she was not permitted to remain at home and write the "indigo" letters that Florence had prophesied. With Jerry on one side, and Florence and Betty on the other, she was guided through the groves and byways of the campus, among the merry groups on their way to the Greek Theatre.

Betty and Florence waved gaily to other groups and called to classmate friends. Marceil was silent and gloomy, still obviously wishing herself elsewhere. They went in at a lower entrance and climbed to their places in the section reserved for University Women. Florence did not allow Marceil to occupy all her attention. She eagerly surveyed the outlines of the big

stage, and the rows upon rows of faces which lined the terraced theatre.

“Isn’t it *beautiful*, Betty?”

“Yes, but the seats are rather hard,” replied that unæsthetic individual.

“Then I wish you had brought a cushion, instead of using my feet for one,” complained an aggrieved sister on the tier above.

“Sing and forget your troubles,” advised Ruth as the song-leader stepped out before them, and signaled for attention.

In a moment the air was vibrating with girl voices. “Fight for the Blue and Gold,” they sang, and “Boola,” and “The Jolly Sophomore.” Marceil remained silent, but did not seem averse to listening to California’s praises.

“Big C means to fight and strive,” echoed through the air while three Freshmen boys held flaming torches to the huge pile of wood in the diazoma of the theatre. The flames raced upward and the great heap was soon a crackling mass of fire, whose roaring was mingled with a sudden cheering from without.

“*That’s* why they call it Pajamarino,” thought Florence as a contingent of sombreroed Seniors serpentined across the stage, rhythmically chant-

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ing their class yell. They were arrayed in pajamas of every conceivable hue.

"Look at the bright green one!" Betty screamed, like a merry child.

"The whole rainbow is here," laughed Jerry, pointing out a brilliant pink that was immediately followed by an equally vivid orange.

"Leave it to the Juniors to get the striking contrasts!" observed a proud member of that class; but the long, snaky line of Sophomores was no less artistic, from that point of view.

The heat of the fire was intense, and the tiers of faces were rapidly becoming hidden behind protecting books and papers which gave the place the appearance of a grotesque, animated library. Freshmen boys were obliged to break their picturesque serpentine into a mad scamper away from the blistering heat. Marceil forgot herself, for a moment, and laughed with the rest.

There was a sudden silence, and the four classes joined in a ferocious growl:

"G-rr-rr-r-rr-rr-rr-rah!
G-rr-rr-r-rr-rr-rr-rah!
Golden Bear! California's bear!
G-rr-rr-r-rr-rr-rr-rr-rr-r-r-rr-rr-rah!"

From five thousand husky throats, it is no won-

der that it made one recall, with a shiver, the gigantic bear of Indian legend! The thundering "Oski!" was equally effective. By this time, Marceil was ready to join in the applause for individual classes and Faculty.

When the leaping flames died down so that they no longer screened the stage from view, there was a corresponding lull in excitement, and the yell-leader announced the "stunts."

"That wasn't so bad," commented Marceil, after the Freshmen's realistic naval battle had been presented by means of fireworks.

Florence smiled, and hastened to admit that the Sophomore contribution was effective, too, although it was painful to see a coffin, bearing her class numerals, thrust into the flames to the accompaniment of a favorite Chopin theme.

Traditions, songs, and cheers, all dear to the hearts of Californians, followed one another rapidly. Florence thrilled to them all,—the symbolic portrayal of Big C, of the campanile, and the Golden Bear. The Senior contribution ended dramatically with the unfurling of a huge silken emblem and a sudden burst of trained voices singing:

"Hail to California, Alma Mater dear!"

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Her pulses spontaneously leaped with love and pride for her University, and she rose with the others and joined her sweet soprano to the chorus that swelled until the air vibrated with thousands of voices. There was an awed stillness after the last ringing “Hail!”

Somebody clutched her arm spasmodically, and Florence turned to look into Marceil’s face—no longer tearfully petulant, but glowing with an intensity of patriotic pride.

“Wasn’t that glorious!” she gasped. “The music,—and the beautiful flag,—and a perfect California sky twinkling through the eucalyptus!”

CHAPTER VI

A NEW FRIEND

“CAN’T let you have your namesake to-day, Miss Essex. Flossie’s been sold to a party who’s taking her up North.” Grey-haired Peter Jenson shook his head with real regret.

“Good old Floss has been sold!” exclaimed Florence disappointedly. “Just as she and I were getting to be such good friends! Why, I’ve never known a horse that I liked better, excepting my own beautiful Snow Queen.”

“It’s too bad. I’m real sorry she had to go—especially as all the other good horses in the stable have been engaged. I don’t like to inflict one of these sleepy old creeturs on a good rider.”

“What about that chestnut over there?” Florence asked eagerly, indicating a spirited colt who was frisking about the field outside.

“That’s Miss Carson’s horse. Expect she’ll be here herself in a half-hour or so.”

Florence sighed, and entered the stable to choose from the few available mounts who were lazily munching hay in their stalls.

She did not particularly enjoy her ride that day. Despite all urging, old Greylock refused to be induced to anything more strenuous than a leisurely trot, and Florence found herself dropping behind until she was finally the last of the little group of "advanced riders." They had made enthusiastic plans for a long jaunt into the foothills, but this particular rider lost all interest in the attainment of distance, and settled herself to the lazy pace of her unsympathetic steed.

Those in front disappeared around a bend some distance ahead, and, biting her lip with impatience and mortification, Florence urged her horse on, that she might get word to the chaperone and give up the useless effort of keeping pace with them. A clatter of hoofs sounded from behind, and the sleek chestnut colt galloped up and was reined in a few rods beyond. His rider was a tall, aristocratic-looking girl, whose blue-black hair and arched brows added to the distinction of her appearance. Florence approached and drew rein beside her, smiling as she looked into the grey eyes that seemed to laugh at her predicament, despite the well-bred decorousness of the girl's face.

"You're Miss Carson?" Florence asked, somewhat timidly.

The girl seemed surprised. "How did you know? People about here don't usually recognize me so readily."

Florence wondered how she could avoid the embarrassment of explaining that it was not the girl, but the horse she had recognized—when she was struck with the familiarity of the pink and white face under the small, felt hat.

"I—I think I've seen your picture in the Los Angeles papers," she faltered, at the same time recalling that Carson was a familiar name in Southern California society.

"Oh, so you're from the South, too?" Miss Carson smiled.

"Santa Barbara," Florence nodded, doing her best to keep alongside the restless chestnut horse.

"Aren't you rather behind the others, Miss —"

"Essex," Florence supplied, frowning with vexation, but she stifled the impulse to defend herself. "Your horse is impatient for a gallop," she said sweetly. "I wonder if you'd mind catching the others and telling Miss Eames that I have turned back? She will understand."

"I'll be pleased to," Miss Carson nodded,

thankful for an excuse to loosen her rein. "Perhaps we shall meet again, Miss Essex. Good-by."

She was off like a shot, and Florence sat watching her, uncertain whether to laugh or frown. She decided to laugh, and turned her horse's head, with a merry challenge,—“Just you wait, Miss Viola Carson of New York and Los Angeles! One of these days, I'll give your skittish chestnut something to think about!”

Having given up the effort to speed along the road, she had nothing to do but enjoy her solitary ride through the September woods. It was the hour that she loved, just before sunset, and the foliage all about her glowed with golden light. Ivy and woodbine covered the cliffs, late summer flowers peeped out among the grass, whose greenness had been preserved by the kindly shade. The creek tinkled along in the canyon below the road. Campers waved to her from enticing glens under the trees.

“How I wish Marceil were with me!” Florence soliloquized. “One does get tired of prim gardens and palm-lined avenues.”

She found consolation in the fact that she might persuade Marceil to come, now that she

herself was forced to ride a creature that would be a fit companion for the slowest horse Marceil might choose.

As it turned out, they did have many enjoyable rides together. Indeed, Marceil became so enthusiastic that she purchased a horse of her own, and was soon gleefully outdistancing Florence. Florence jokingly called her ungrateful and hard-hearted, but she sometimes found it hard to hide her impatience and disappointment on the many occasions when she was forced to ride old Greylock. She began to dread Viola Carson's superior, encouraging smile and the swift clatter of hoofs which always announced her approach.

"Showing off," she would murmur vehemently, at the same time wishing that she herself had just such a chance to "show off."

But there was nothing to do but resign herself to circumstances, and as she loved riding too much to give it up altogether, she continued to get what enjoyment she could out of her leisurely canters. Even they were refreshing, after a day spent in classrooms and library.

"Flo, you're not going riding to-night, are you?" pleaded Betty one Friday evening, as they

were leaving Wheeler Hall. "Rob and Charles have asked Mother Preston to chaperone us on a little drive to Oakland,—out around the lake and back. You're the only one who hasn't said 'yes' to the arrangement. Quick—say it! Charlie's coupé is speedier than old Greylock," she added, her eyes twinkling.

"You're not a bit tactful," said Florence, trying her best to look injured. "However, since the arrangements seem to be all made, I don't see how I can refuse."

"You're a precious," exulted Betty.

Mark Hendrix, with football under his arm, trotted past them toward the stadium. "Where's your horse to-night?" he inquired roguishly. "Did you decide that your own feet were quicker?"

"Is that horse so very terrible?" queried Florence, after his retreating figure. "Everybody seems to know him."

"Why should you care, as long as they are not criticizing the rider?" Betty reasoned.

"I'm not sure whether they are or not. Maybe, I am getting too used to the sleepy old brute."

"Flo, are you inviting Mark to the Gamma Zeta Formal?" Betty inquired irrelevantly.

"No,—that is, I haven't put in any one's name, yet."

"But you're going to invite him?"

"I don't know. Why?"

"Well, I'd like to invite Charles."

"Oh!" Florence understood immediately. "Then, I'll ask your nice cousin. I wanted to, but I thought you were going to."

"And I thought that you might not, in which case I'd have to forego the fair Charles whom I've known ever since I was three. Well, that's settled." Betty sighed, as though a huge weight had slipped off her mind.

Margaret looked in at their door as soon as they were back from their drive.

"Flaw-w-rence," she drawled, "there was a telegram came over the 'phone for you. A lady coming in from Los Angeles wants you to meet her at the pier to-morrow."

"Who?" asked Florence eagerly.

"Ah didn't get the na-ame," Margaret drawled regretfully. "But Ah gather it's an old friend. You'll probably recognize her, anyway."

"Oh, but I might miss her in the crowd, if I don't know whom to look for," protested Florence.

Margaret looked contrite, and rolled her grey eyes dolefully. "Ah'm powerful sorry, but that's the best Ah could make of it. Ah reckon that she thinks you'll recognize her without any trouble, crowd or no crowd."

Florence saw that it was of no use to protest further. Her mind became a whirl of rapid conjecture, which did not cease, even when she and Betty walked toward the pier in San Francisco, next day.

"If it were mock-initiation season, I'd be suspicious," she said, when they were waiting impatiently at the appointed place near the pier. Crowds passed by,—grey-haired women, well-dressed young girls, wide-eyed tourists, hurrying business people. Florence recognized none of them, and, as the crowd thinned, and baggage carts began to whiz back and forth all about them, she looked at Betty quizzically.

"Betty, tell me. *Is it all a joke?*"

"A mighty poor one, if it is," Betty asserted. "Honestly, Flo, I don't know any more about this than you do."

Just as they were contemplating turning away, the air was stirred with a long-drawn-out neigh, and Florence, with an exclamation of delight,

turned to behold her own Snow Queen tugging at the rope by which she was held. Without an instant's hesitation, she rushed to the horse's side and took the beautiful white head in her arms, exclaiming with gladness while the horse returned her caresses in its own fashion, neighing for pure joy at sight of her beloved mistress.

"Don't need credentials after that," laughed the baggageman, "but they'll want your signature at the office. I'll hold her for you."

It was easier said than done, for Snow Queen, once having caught sight of her mistress, was loth to let her go, and Florence had to use all her powers of persuasion before the usually obedient horse would consent to stand still long enough to permit arrangements for her transportation to Berkeley.

"It was Jim who did that, the old dear," Florence decided, when she and Betty were on their way back. "It's just like him to send a mysterious telegram so that I'd not get an inkling of the grand surprise awaiting me."

She was bubbling over with happiness, and could concentrate on nothing else until Snow Queen was comfortably housed in the best stall available at Jenson's.



HER OWN SNOW QUEEN.—Page 84.

“No more old Greylock for me!” she rejoiced, reveling in the task of brushing out Snow Queen’s luxuriant mane. “Oh, won’t we make Viola Carson’s Lightning look to his paces, my Queen!”

She took her first ride, alone, while Berkeley was still wrapped in the blue mists of early morning; and, judging from the horse’s behavior, Florence was not alone in her ecstasy over this unexpected reunion.

Snow Queen was not the only white horse in the Jenson stables, but she was, by far, the most beautiful one, and she attracted much attention those first few days. Florence’s contemporaries, who had laughed and joked good-naturedly about old Greylock, now regarded her and her mount with envy and admiration, and Florence, being human, herein found some compensation for the lazy rides on Greylock.

She had taken several trips on Snow Queen before she again heard the familiar clatter of Viola Carson’s galloping horse. As had been her custom, she slipped to the side of the road to let her pass. But Viola did not proceed far ahead before she wheeled and trotted her horse back toward Florence, her face betraying a mixture of surprise and admiration.

“Miss Essex—it’s you! How did you happen to get hold of that beautiful horse? Isn’t it quite a jump from old Greylock? Aren’t you afraid? Though, I must admit that you make a pretty picture, sitting so gracefully on the snowy creature.”

“It is quite a jump from old Greylock to Snow Queen,” Florence agreed, dimpling, “but I manage to get along all right.”

“Have you tried a gallop on her?” Viola inquired sweetly.

“I was intending to try a little gallop when we got to that straight piece of road ahead,” Florence replied demurely.

“Good!” encouraged Viola. “I’ll keep alongside.”

Florence smiled mischievously, and said no more until they reached the point directly beyond the turn of the road. Then, patting Queen, and leaning forward to murmur a word in her ear, she let out the rein and spurted ahead like a white streak. Viola kept apace for a short distance, but gradually dropped behind. Snow Queen had experienced many a long, arduous run in her life, and enjoyed this sudden, mad dash as much as her rider did.

When Florence at last pulled rein and stopped, Viola was nowhere in sight, and several seconds ticked away before the chestnut colt came into view, far down the road. Viola finally drew alongside and, smiling, reached a hand to her vanquisher.

“Congratulations! You certainly did that prettily. Now I think I know who is the ‘private owner’ whose name Peter Jenson refused to divulge when I asked him about your horse. But tell me, you little rogue, why all this pretense?”

“I had no intention of pretending, until after you had formed your opinion of my riding,” Florence smiled. “Old Greylock was much too big and clumsy for me, besides being the laziest horse that ever ate oats. It piqued me a little to think that an experienced horsewoman couldn’t see that the fault was in the horse, and not in the rider. To-day I couldn’t resist the temptation to surprise you a bit.”

“Forgive me,” Viola laughed. “I’m afraid I always was a little too proud of my riding, and now I’m properly punished. Shall we canter back together?”

This was the beginning of a friendship that was to shed its influence over all Florence’s life.

CHAPTER VII

BIG GAME WEEK

Two hundred Logic 1-a students were buzzing with the industry usually characteristic of the few minutes preceding the entrance of Professor Grey. A young man walked briskly down the aisle and up the steps of the platform,—a signal for fountain pens to be uncapped, and for two hundred pairs of eyes to turn toward him, in expectation of some academic announcement. But the grin on this young man's face was not conducive to a serious attitude of mind, and no wonder, for they saw now that he was not a Sophomore "reader," but a very energetic Freshman yell-leader.

"Come on, Freshmen!" he shouted. "There are two members of the Varsity in this room right now. Let's show 'em what we think of them!"

The usual "Oski!" gave way to a prolonged cheer for the Varsity, and then a song, in which the girls joined heartily.

Whatever Freshmen were surprised by this unacademic display were to find that songs and

cheers were a regular part of recitation and lecture programs during Big Game Week. Learned professors and scholarly instructors indulged their classes smilingly. It was often possible to see a grey-bearded lecturer on Greek antiquities or Orthogonal Metrics joining whole-heartedly in a rousing "Rah!" or adding a cheerful baritone to the melody of "Hail to California!"

At night, "Big C," guarded by watchful Sophomores, sprang out of the darkness in a blaze of electric lights, and stood against the blackness of the hills like an alphabetical constellation suspended over the earth.

The Gamma Zeta Formal was a part of the week's festivities. Florence donned her green ruffles and her mother's emerald ring, feeling that her best and prettiest were none too good for this occasion. Was not her escort a "guardian of the C" who had done his duty by the shining letter early in the evening, so that he might be free to be with her?

"We're both ready," said Betty at last. "Shall we trot around and see everybody?"

"Yes, if you are prepared to make yourself useful with hooks, pins, and so on."

They went from room to room, exclaiming over the shining visions in silks and gauzy stuffs.

"I think this is going to be a really pretty party, 'spite of the men," Sidney Cartwright volunteered, glimpsing down the hall the colorful, radiant groups of girls. "What do you mean by having two corsages, Florence?" as the maid deposited two floral offerings, both bearing the same name.

The recipient exclaimed with delight over the daintiest of French bouquets, a perfect finishing touch for her gossamer ruffles. "The other is for the game to-morrow." She held up to the admiring audience a gorgeous specimen of the traditional California chrysanthemum, surrounded by violets and fern and finished with blue-and-gold streamers of rich, satin ribbon. "Isn't Betty's cousin an angel?"

"Not that I have ever noticed!" Betty testified, just as Ruth ran up the stairs calling softly:

"Girls! The guests are beginning to arrive, and if the rest of the receiving line will come down, we can start things properly."

Florence's first formal dance was perfect—all she had dreamed it would be: beautiful gowns and colorful decorations in harmony with the

wonderful music, all the courtesy and gentility of good breeding in each participant. Programs had been previously arranged so that there were no odd dancers, and the evening sped smoothly along.

"Are you all excited about the game?" Robert Arclift asked, as they refreshed themselves at the punch booth.

"What a question! When nobody has been able to think of anything else for days!"

"Well, you wouldn't be normal if you weren't thrilled," Robert beamed. "Outside folks come hundreds of miles for the occasion."

"And spend as many dollars!"

"It is always the way. I certainly am looking forward to our party to-morrow. Here comes a Varsity man right now, looking as though he is determined to have a dance with you before he has to report back to training-quarters."

The Big Game excitement reached its highest pitch on the following day. The campus teemed with visitors from all points of the compass, each one wearing either the blue and gold of California, or the cardinal and white of Stanford. Honking automobiles fairly streamed through the

decorated streets. In every store window, miniature footballs and favors abounded among the red and white or blue and gold. Songs and cheers broke out of dormitories and fraternity houses every few moments. Pennants and ribbons fluttered, lettered chrysanthemums were visible on all sides.

"I don't know *when* I've been so thrilled!" Florence beamed. She was being ably guided through the crush toward the great stadium by Robert, in company with Betty, Charles, and Mrs. Preston.

Following the carefully placed signs of the color matching their tickets, they found themselves at the stadium entrance and inside, without any undue crowding or confusion.

"Just look at the people here already, and I thought we were early!"

"And look up on the hills above the stadium! The place is black with them!"

"There ought to be over eighty thousand here this afternoon," Robert estimated.

"Enough to fill several fair-sized towns," Florence observed. "Think of all the places and classes they represent."

It was fascinating to watch the human stream,

the densely packed tiers of the mammoth stadium, to listen to the well-drilled rooting sections, and breathe deep of the excitement. Presently there was a lull, followed by renewed cheers as the uniformed bands marched in, columned twice around the field, and then formed ranks together in the centre for an inspiring rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner."

"Why, you're just quivering!" exclaimed Robert, as he assisted Florence to her seat again.

Her eyes sparkled and her cheeks glowed a defiant crimson rival to the yellow chrysanthemum nestling on her shoulder. "Who wouldn't be?" she laughed. "It's all so—so magnificent!"

A sudden prolonged cheer, and the Cardinal huskies, escorted by a troupe of red-plaided pipers, filed onto the field. Another, swelling in volume, and the Blue and Golds came on, a fluffy little bear-cub trotting along in front, quite as if he knew that he belonged to them, and was proud to tell the world so! Eighty thousand throats, and every one of them ready to split in its effort to cheer on the men. For several long minutes the din continued, only stopping when the whistle blew for line-up. A sudden hush before

the kick-off by Trent of California. Ah—the game is on!

Florence's knowledge of football was not very scientific, but she had been a willing pupil under such expert coaches as Robert, the Gamma Zeta girls, and most important perhaps—Mark Hendrix, who was now conspicuous on the field. She watched every move breathlessly, cheered with the rest when California gained a yard, sighed with them when the ball went back into Stanford's territory. The first and second quarters passed with the score boards still reading 0-0.

With victory still an open question, the multitude eagerly turned their attention to what the rooting sections had to offer. By means of colored caps on the heads of the regularly seated rooters, California and Stanford gave a surprising exhibition of pictures composed of human beings. At a signal, the Stanford section became a field of white.

“Spell it!” the yell-leader shouted.

An explosive “S” rent the air simultaneously with the appearance of a red letter on the field of white. “T,” they cheered, and a crimson T jumped into being beside the S. So they spelled it, until accompanied by a hearty “Rah!”

the whole name STANFORD stood emblazoned in brilliant scarlet, against the white background. Perfectly done, the unison and precision in the magic change of caps would have done credit to a trained army squad.

As the cheering died away, all eyes were turned to the California side, which had become a huge square of blue. From the extreme top, a tiny red S jerkily intruded its way down. The air suddenly reverberated with a ferocious "G-rrr-rr-rrr-rr-rah!" and a mammoth golden bear appeared, vivid against the blue. The S jumped back, but Bruin opened prodigious jaws, stretched them over the S's tiny form, and snapped them shut! The red S had become a part of the golden bear to the tune of

" When our Oski rips through the air,
Stanford's team will be found
In the tummy of the Golden Bear!"

It was in the early part of the third quarter that Hendrix made a spectacular sixty-yard run. Followed a few moments of feverishly excited play, and California had scored a touchdown. Prolonged cheering suddenly hushed as California's man stepped before the goal to "con-

vert ”; renewed cheering, when a well-placed kick sent the ball over. The score board now read “California 7, Stanford 0.”

The last quarter, California was quietly confident, Stanford fluctuating between discouragement and a desperate final sally. They decide for the latter, and the game progresses with renewed speed and vigor. The ball is within ten yards of Stanford’s goal. “Take it back, California!” they shout on one side, and on the other, “Make it a touchdown, Stanford!” A fierce struggle, Stanford loses, gains again, but California gets possession of the ball just as the last two minutes are ticking away. Their only hope of scoring is by a goal from the field, and after a successful forward pass, the result is certain. California scores another three points just as the final whistle blows!

Florence never forgot the mad excitement of it all, the cheering and band playing and congratulations and laughter all mixed together,—the victorious serpentine across the field.

“‘The game’s the thing,’ I suppose,” she parodied, as they picked their way through the crowd, “but just the same, what would it be without all the frills?”

“It would be a mere game,” laughed Robert. “But the Big Game would not be complete without the frills. Dinner at the Palace is the finishing touch,” he cheerily informed her, as they boarded a train for San Francisco and hurried Mrs. Preston into the only available seat.

A stranger arriving at the Palace that evening would have thought the excitement just begun. Singing, cheering, laughing crowds of youths and girls, with more than a few older faces among them, filled the great dining-room and all the banquet-rooms. Californians waved blue ribbons and yellow chrysanthemums and glowed with victory. Stanfordites showed their colors, too, and talked of what they would do next year.

Mrs. Preston and her party sat at a table in the main dining-room, where excitement still ran high. Florence was thrusting her spoon into a frozen golden “football” when she heard her name, and looked up inquiringly. Viola Carson smiled at her from a table near by, and, as the Freshman nodded her pleased recognition, the older girl and her escort rose and came toward her.

“Miss Essex, I have told my brother how a little Freshman and her horse got the better of

me and Lightning. He has been very eager to meet you; may I present him?"

While Florence in turn introduced her friends to Mrs. Preston and the others, she had time to observe Ted Carson's blue-black hair and comely face. He was a counterpart, in masculine, of his lovely sister. His deference to Mrs. Preston, his interest in the younger members of the party, won them all. In five minutes, Viola and her brother were quite "one of them," and later the little group exchanged several dances.

Ted Carson was a man of wide and varied experiences. He could tell breath-taking stories of his adventures during the war, when he had often piloted his plane under the very noses of German dirigibles. Unlike Viola, who was reticent about her travels, Ted vastly enjoyed telling of his experiences, once he was assured of an appreciative listener, and Florence was such. Her round-eyed attention flattered him; he was at his best, that night at the Palace.

To the young girl, whose travels had never extended beyond the boundaries of California, and whose most thrilling adventure had been the time she had lost herself within a hundred yards of camp in the Yosemite, Ted Carson was like a

story-book hero come to life. He had beauty, wealth, distinguished friends, he had been lauded for bravery in the war; though very much "a man of the world," he had also the mark of the out-of-doors, he was evidently one of those rare individuals who can adapt himself to coffee and beans in a shelterless wilderness, as well as to *pâté-de-fois-gras* sandwiches and pink tea at the Ritz. Both he and Viola were the very antithesis of the bored, self-important society butterfly.

Florence was not the only one who found them an attractive pair. It was obvious that the others were pleased and honored by their presence, though Charles Hartley and Robert Arclift might have resented, just a little bit, the intrusion of this attractive being whose poise and maturity rendered them so boyishly *gauche* by contrast.

They parted with good-natured plans to meet again in the future, but Robert could not quite conceal his relief when the conversation shifted from the enviable qualities of the Carsons back to the subject of Alma Mater and the newly inspired desire to "do something proud" for the Blue and Gold.

CHAPTER VIII

CONTRASTS

As Mrs. Essex had prophesied, college days fairly seemed to fly. After the Big Game came Thanksgiving and a hurried trip home, Florence arriving just in time to sit down to turkey dinner. Two memorable days with the dear ones, much humored and petted, passed like a happy dream.

There was a decided air of "getting back to work" when she returned to Berkeley. Festivities had given way to the more serious business of preparing for mid-year finals. Already the foreboding yellow lists of examination hours were posted, and there was always a group about them, industriously noting the time and places of various three-hour "exams."

Pre-winter fogs and chill took away the charm of outdoor study, and the lawns and gardens of the campus began to be deserted in favor of the library.

Florence was nervously watching the hands of the campanile clock creep slowly past the hour, while Professor Costa, blithely unconscious of

the passage of time, read on in Cato's "De Senectute." Florence was not yet at the age when the opinion of an ancient philosopher regarding old age should be of vital interest to her, but that was not the reason for her unrest. She had a class in the Greek Theatre at eleven o'clock, —and the Greek Theatre was a long walk from Wheeler Hall.

When Professor Costa laid down his book, she half rose, ready to make a hurried exit, but he picked up another book.

"Just one minute more," he pleaded. "I want to give you a few words from Horace in order that those of you who are doubtful about going on with Latin may be persuaded not to give it up. No life is really rich without a first-hand acquaintance with Horace's 'Odes and Epodes.' Just a short selection. Listen, now."

Florence sank back in her seat and tried her best to appreciate the beauties of the Latin poet, but, after a few moments had ticked away and Professor Costa was still reading as though he never intended to stop, she rose quietly, and resolutely walked to the door.

"Whither goest thou, my Muse?" translated Professor Costa serenely, and a burst of laughter

called him back from the glories of Roman literature to the twinkling eyes of a roomful of twentieth-century students.

Florence's exit was doubly hurried by this little incident. "A minute and a half to get to the Greek Theatre," she worried. "Professor Ashe was going to start a comprehensive review today." She did not want to miss a moment of it.

Coming to the outer door, she looked up at the grey sky in dismay. It was completely clouded over, and, already, large drops were beginning to fall.

"I *thought* it would rain," she voiced inwardly, rejoicing in the fact that she had brought an umbrella. "I suppose this means no class in the Theatre, but it may be only a shower. I'll run up and see."

The campanile stood gleaming white against the sombre sky. As Florence looked up at it, the minute hand of the clock jumped to ten minutes past eleven, and, simultaneously, there came a downpour as if to assure her that she need not hurry. She turned back. There was no other available place large enough to accommodate Professor Ashe's class, and so "the first rain of the season" rendered the class excused.

Florence followed the few hurrying figures still visible on the almost deserted campus. The rain was coming down in earnest now. Book-laden students and professors were scurrying to find shelter. As Florence hurried back toward Wheeler Hall, she saw a bent little figure ahead of her, mincing along on tiptoe in an effort to keep her feet dry. Her books were sheltered inside the shabby sweater, but she had no umbrella. Florence caught up with her.

“Have a piece of my umbrella, Sadie,” she smiled. “I seem to be one of the lucky few who brought one to the campus to-day.”

Sadie Erna smiled but faintly and glanced about as if ready to flee, but finally fell in step beside Florence.

“Isn’t this a downpour, considering that it’s our first rain?” babbled Florence, determined to make Sadie Erna forget herself for once. She was sure that the made-over clothes and shabby shoes, in which the water squeaked at every step, were the cause of Sadie’s discomfiture. “Do you have many finals, Sadie?” she went on, in a desperate effort to make conversation.

“Seven,” replied Sadie perfunctorily.

“Seven! Why, you’ll kill yourself!”

"I am hoping to get my degree at the end of three years," volunteered Sadie, striding ahead with disconcerting haste.

"Oh! Well, you certainly are ambitious!" Florence readily understood why Sadie wished to shorten her college course, and tactfully refrained from further reference to overwork. It would be of no use to talk to Sadie Erna about that.

"Thanks very much. I turn here," said Sadie, and she scurried away down Pepper Tree Alley before Florence had any opportunity to protest. It was still pouring. Sadie would be drenched before she even reached the street.

Florence continued on her own way, trying to reason away the feeling that Sadie Erna's "queerness" was not all self-consciousness, but that, as Betty had hinted, the girl actually had some antipathy toward her. She recalled the incident at the store. Betty seemed to think that Sadie had deliberately delayed her, knowing that every second was precious. She remembered other occasions,—once on the hockey-field, when Sadie had played against her with almost savage roughness; she recalled the expression on Sadie's face as she turned away from the bul-

letin-board on which Florence's name was posted in the intersorority tennis list.

"But *why* should she dislike me?" Florence puzzled. "Goodness knows, I try to be friendly enough."

When she reached the Wheeler Hall rest-room, thoughts of Sadie were immediately dispersed by the sunshine of Viola Carson's smile. Florence was somewhat flattered by the attention paid her by this prominent Senior and, aside from her actual regard for Viola, she liked to be seen in the company of a girl whose very appearance distinguished her.

Viola nodded pleasantly as she was passing with a group of friends, but she returned just as Florence was opening her note-book.

"Nice little Freshman," began Viola taking a seat beside her, "put your books away. I want to talk to you a minute."

Viola was always irresistible but, when she thus put herself out to be pleasant, Florence's good intentions were not proof against her. The note-book closed with a bang, and she was all attention.

"I suppose you're going home for Christmas?" Viola went on.

"Oh yes indeed! And I'm taking 'the homesickest Freshman in the country' with me, to show her what a California Christmas is like."

"The little Boston girl?" queried Viola. "Of course she wants to pick roses on Christmas Day. They all do. Is—will she be with you all vacation?"

"I think so, though some of the other girls will want her too, I expect."

"Then you must introduce her to me," Viola smiled. "I want you to visit me at my home for a few days at least. You will, won't you? There's a dear. And of course your guest must come, too. I shall ask her personally, as soon as you make us acquainted."

Florence tried not to show that she was overwhelmed. The Carson mansion was pointed out to tourists and strangers as one of the sights of the city. Florence could remember when she had viewed it from afar and had told her mother that it must be the home of a veritable princess. And now, the princess was asking her to be a guest at the gleaming white castle!

"That's lovely of you," Viola was saying, obviously pleased by Florence's eager acquiescence, and speaking as though the prospective guest

were the one who was bestowing the favor. "You'll have your horse shipped south for the holidays, I suppose? Good! We'll have some glorious rides together."

It was still raining when the twelve o'clock chimes startled them out of their animated discussion of horses and equestrian experiences. Florence was glad to take advantage of Viola's offer to drive home with her. In a shining grey coupé she sped along the wet streets, comparing Viola's trim, silk-clad ankles, warm and dry, with Sadie's shabbily dressed feet, from which the water seeped at every step.

CHAPTER IX

MARCEIL'S CALIFORNIA CHRISTMAS

"I WISH I were taking you home with me for Christmas, Flo," pouted Betty. They had just finished a three-hour Logic examination, and were strolling about the campus like the most luxurious of idlers. "We could have such a good time up there in the snow."

"You're a dear, and we *will* have an exchange of visits before very long."

Betty linked her arm into Florence's with an affectionate little gesture. "Maybe there will be snow for Christmas. I thought Marceil might like to come, too. Doesn't she get the most violent fits of homesickness sometimes? You must let her come for the last part of vacation. You don't think me mean to take her away from you, do you?"

"Of course not," Florence assured her. "Marss will love it, and, if I hadn't promised Viola, I'd love to come, too."

Just at that moment a big raindrop splashed on her cheek. "Why, it's raining!" she cried,

looking up at the overcast sky. "I guess we can't have our stroll after all!"

The campus did not look especially inviting, at any rate. It was dull and deserted except for a few scattered groups who, like themselves, had just been released from examinations. They passed a couple arguing over the date of Virgil's birth, and another discussing the characteristics of protoplasm.

"How learned every one is around examination time," Florence remarked. "Just to sit on the library steps and listen to the discussion is an education."

"Not on a rainy day. Hurry, or we'll be drenched. Let's go back through the botanical gardens."

They ran across the campus, laughingly enjoying their dash through the cool, damp air, and gained the porch of the house just in time to upset an expressman coming out with a load of suitcases.

"Which reminds me," said Betty, "that I am not entirely a lady of leisure, even if I have finished my last examination. Are you all packed, Flo?"

"No, haven't even begun yet. There won't be

any chance to start now, either. By the time we get into dry things, the dinner gong will ring. I'll help you to-night, though, if you want me to. Viola has her last 'exam.' on Thursday. She has invited Marss and me to share her compartment—isn't that dear of her?"

"Yes,—that means a whole day to wait, though, doesn't it? It's a shame to waste a day around this deserted house," mumbled Betty from the closet. Somehow, Viola's wealth and charm had failed to inspire her. "Isn't this the deadest place, now that so many of the girls have gone home?" she went on.

They kept up a lively conversation, a reaction, perhaps, to the long strain of the final examination period, as well as an effort to offset the dreariness of the dark day and the nearly empty house. The lonesomeness and quiet was a depressing contrast to the usual girlish animation which abounded, especially at the end of the semester with its rush of good-bys and exchange of mysterious packages "not to be opened until Christmas."

The trip south was thoroughly enjoyable, though uneventful. The weather had cleared,

and the sun shone out of a sky that was bluer than ever. Hills and woodland were just beginning to robe themselves in winter verdure, which the rain had coaxed out.

Marceil exclaimed and eulogized sufficiently to satisfy even the most loyal native daughter, and when they jumped off the train at the flower-decked Santa Barbara station, she was still laughingly exclaiming, "And to think it's December!"

Dr. and Mrs. Essex were there to greet the returned absentee, and Jim appeared around the corner of the station with a comical expression of surprise on his tanned face.

"I didn't know the train was in!" he cried, as soon as Florence's impetuous embrace gave him an opportunity to speak. "I just went over there to buy a souvenir candle to keep the girls from getting homesick, or rather 'college-sick,' during vacation."

Introductions were made very informally, and then Jim opened a box and held up to them a tall, four-sided white candle, pointed at the top, and with clock and windows painted on each of its four sides—a perfect miniature of the campanile.

"How clever!" smiled Viola, and therewith

Jim bowed and delivered it into her hands. "Pray do me the honor to accept, Fair Lady," he said grandiosely. "Your train is about to leave, and I have plenty of time to buy another for each of these girls."

"Thank you, indeed!" said the daughter of the wealthy Carsons, as delighted as if some priceless gift had been bestowed upon her.

Reciprocal thanks, good-bys, and promises to meet again filled the last minute while Viola stood upon the step and waved. The wheels were slowly turning, and the train, gathering speed, moved off toward Los Angeles.

Marceil continued to be all interest as the sedan bore them through the business section and out into the broad, residential avenues. Her first act, upon reaching the Essex cottage, was to run to the side of the house, where she had spied an orange-tree.

"I've always wanted to see what a real, live orange-tree looked like," she laughed, picking one of the green fruit. "May I borrow your knife, Dr. Essex? I want to see what a green orange is like inside."

Laughingly, they watched her cut open the fruit, and look up, disappointed.

"Yellow!" she cried, "and I thought it would be a beautiful, transparent green. California is a land of disillusion," she added in a mock-tragic tone that told them she thought quite the opposite.

Marceil's first morning in Santa Barbara dawned warm and clear. She lay blinking at the sunbeam that tormented her as if to wake her with its cheery greeting, and then sat up and looked through the screen of the sleeping-porch, out over the treetops. Sun glistened on the blue Pacific in the distance, and shed its mellow light on the thin blades of palms, the clumps of callalilies and roses in the garden below.

"And to think it's less than a week till Christmas!" she sighed delightedly. "It just can't be!"

She dressed and went downstairs, where she found Florence setting the table for breakfast in the sunny dining-room.

"Good-morning. Can I help?" Marceil called cheerily.

"You might run out and get some fresh flowers for the table," suggested Florence, with a sly little smile at Jim who came in rattling the morning paper.

Marceil saw the smile and wagged her head knowingly. "I may as well admit that there isn't anything I'd rather do, just now," she smiled. "I intend to do everything in traditional style—pick flowers and oranges (even if they are green) on Christmas Day, and see an ostrich, an alligator, and a motion-picture star with my own eyes!"

"Hollywood would be mightily flattered to have you classify its darlings with the ostriches and alligators," Jim laughed.

"I don't care. They're the three wonders of the West," Marceil retorted, dancing out of the French doors into the garden.

She plucked choice specimens of pink roses and creamy calla-lilies. In a damp corner she found a flourishing fernery, and cut some fronds to add to her bouquet.

"I just can't make myself believe that it's Christmas Week," she said, coming in, her eyes still wide with wonder.

Florence beamed. "It's going to be such *fun* giving you a California Christmas!"

Marceil's visit with the Essexes was a very homey, happy one. They all, even Indian Minna,

treated her with an informal hospitality that quite delighted her and made her feel as though she belonged among them. There were long, delightful walks through the woods that made her think of springtime in New England, there were exhilarating rides up in the hills, and, now and then, a swim in the curling surf.

"I don't remember when I've ever had such a good time before," she exulted one day, as they sought a warm spot in the sand and sat down to watch the crested waves roll in. "But isn't it terribly hard to keep track of the seasons here? Doesn't it get monotonous having summer all the time?"

"We don't have summer all the time, and our seasons are not all alike. It gets quite chilly in the winter. Why, last year, the dew was frozen one morning, and it didn't get comfortably warm until afternoon."

Marceil laughed. "Well, that's what I mean. Just a little variation in temperature, but the seasons are not very different. One can hardly tell them apart, except that it rains in the winter, and doesn't in the summer," Jerry would have rejoiced could she have heard the spirited way in which Florence replied.

“But isn’t that just as distinct a difference as having it cold in the winter and hot in the summer?”

“Oh, no! I wish you could spend a year in New England, Florence. You’d love it. Spring is so warm and moist and green, after the cold of winter, and then comes summer—that’s just like Santa Barbara winter—fluffy dresses and cool drinks, and water sports. I think I love the autumn best, though. The air has a bracing tang in it, and there’s nothing so exhilarating as hiking through the woods under the boughs of flaming leaves.”

“I’d love to see the autumn woods,” breathed Florence, looking into Marceil’s dreamy eyes. “I’ve always wanted to see snow and ice, too. It has been one of my great desires.”

“You must come East with me, some day,” declared Marceil. “I’d like to show a Californian that little old Massachusetts has a right to show off, too,” she added, with a mischievous twinkle.

“But I really *should* love to spend a winter in New England,” Florence insisted, earnestly. “It must be beautiful. I want to see those ‘long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees,’ and the

‘ice-fern leaf,’ and the ‘nodding bulrush tops—
hung thickly with diamond drops.’ ”

“It is beautiful,” said Marceil softly. “Lowell doesn’t exaggerate in the least. I’d like to show you a New England Christmas, with snowflakes in the air, falling against the window-pane, and spluttering down the chimney onto the fire.”

Florence sifted the warm sand through her fingers and looked out over the shining Pacific, trying to grasp the vision that gave to Marceil’s eyes that wistful, far-away look.

The Eastern girl was very quiet during the rest of the day. Early after luncheon, she went to her room to write letters home, and when four o’clock brought the evening mail, she still failed to make her appearance downstairs.

“Two letters for Marss, and one to both of us from Betty,” Florence answered, when her mother asked what mail there was. She hesitated to disturb Marceil, but Betty’s letter was too tempting. She ran upstairs and tapped lightly on the door of the guest chamber.

“Come in,” called Marceil.

Florence found her still gazing dreamily over the treetops. “Two letters for you, Marss, and one for both of us, from B. Arclift.”

"You open Betty's, while I glance through these." Marceil could not conceal the eagerness with which she took the two letters postmarked Boston.

Several moments of silence were interrupted when Florence jumped up to exclaim, "Excuse me, Marss, but you'll love this. It's all about a big snowstorm, and coasting, and the skating-carnival they're going to have at Donner Lake on New Year's Day. You skate, of course? Oh, but you'll miss it, won't you? You won't be going up until the eighth."

Marceil took the note without replying. Florence watched her face glow with eager excitement as she read. It was not until then that she discovered that Marceil's eyelids were red, and instantly, she understood. Marceil was suffering from a desperate siege of homesickness, brought on by their recent talk. Sunny skies and waving palm-fronds had just now lost their charm for her. She was craving a sparkling white landscape, and icicles, and falling snowflakes.

Florence scowled. She knew how terrible was the scourge of homesickness. And Marceil was three thousand miles from home!

"I can't take her home," the perplexed hostess

reasoned, "but I can do the next best thing. Marceil," she began, with sympathetic earnestness. "You can see that Betty is all aquiver to get you up there, though she's too polite to ask you to shorten your stay with me. And I can see that you are not so terribly anxious to pick roses on Christmas Day. Tell me, would you rather spend Christmas up in the snow, with Betty?"

Marceil looked up startled, and began a polite protest; but she knew that Florence understood too well for that. "You're a dear!" she cried, her eyes filling. "And I'm a horrid, mean, ungrateful guest."

"Don't talk that way, silly. It was my fault to let you get homesick, anyway."

And so, instead of gathering oranges and roses on Christmas morning, Marceil Adams exultingly tramped through three feet of snow, and came in to dinner at the Arclifts, quite ready to believe that it was Christmas, despite the fact that she had been swimming in the Pacific only three days before. And *that* was her California Christmas.

CHAPTER X

A VISIT TO VIOLA

VIOLA and her mother met Florence at the Los Angeles station one day early in the New Year and, greeting her warmly, consigned her baggage to a deferential chauffeur who led them through the crowd of tourists, noisy taxi men, and newsboys. A luxurious limousine awaited them, and Florence sank back among the cushions with a sigh of delight.

As they glided away, almost noiselessly, Mrs. Carson turned toward Florence. "And so you are Dr. Essex's little girl," she smiled. "Isn't he the surgeon who had charge of the X hospital in France? Of course! I knew he must be. My Ted was at the X for several long months. He was wounded several times," she added, obviously proud of the fact, now that all the suffering and anxiety were over. "Everybody loved and honored Dr. Essex."

Florence was pleased to find this link between them. She was still a little awed by the wealth of the Carsons. Ted Carson, of *the* Carsons had

been tended, perhaps his life had been saved, by her own father! Her heart grew warm at the thought that the debt was not all on her side.

“Ted would never speak of the times he was wounded,” explained Viola. “That’s probably the reason he never asked about Dr. Essex. And of course, during the war, he was just Lieutenant Carson. Your father would not remember him.”

“*Just* Lieutenant Carson—with all those medals and citations!” echoed Florence mockingly.

She could not have said anything which would have better pleased her hostesses. Both beamed proudly as Viola answered, “But he did not get all those at once, you know.”

The car turned into a park-like enclosure and rolled up the long drive to the Carson mansion, a veritable palace of marble, overlooking the city and the distant harbor. Florence contemplated it with silent admiration. She gathered an impression of terraced gardens filled with brilliantly colored flowers, lawns stretching far over the smooth slopes, palm-trees, fountains, and clear pools. They entered through a massive antique door, which swung open noiselessly. Butlers and maids seemed to spring up everywhere,

and, in a short time, had taken possession of baggage and wraps, and had piloted the visitor over mossy-carpeted stairs to the guest chamber.

Almost before she was aware of it, Florence found herself in the daintiest of rose-draped boudoirs, and the neat little maid closed the door with a respectful "Eef you will be in need of anyzing, please press ze bell, and I shall come."

Florence went about touching things curiously, —the heavy silk and lace bedspread, the sheer, cobwebby curtains that were such a striking contrast to the velvet drapes. She picked up a gold-backed brush and ran it over her hair, then laid it down again to look at it, gleaming there among all the pretty toilet articles and cut-glass perfume bottles. She tiptoed over to the window and gazed out over the lovely gardens, the lawns, and plashing fountains.

"Such gorgeousness!" she whispered. "Whatever makes Viola want to leave it to live in an apartment in Berkeley? Oh, how wonderful it must be to be rich!"

Dinner was an elaborate affair which quite set Florence at her ease concerning the appropriateness of her emerald-green dress. Nothing was too formal here. She was glad that Viola had

never seen the green dress. Viola never wore the same evening gown twice.

Ted and his father were present, and also a young man evidently quite at home among the Carsons. His name was familiar to Florence. The Aldemeres were almost as well known in Los Angeles as the Carsons themselves.

Mr. Carson was a pompous, rather absorbed man-of-affairs whose solemn silence was a discouraging pall on conversation, despite the brave attempts of Viola and her mother to lighten the atmosphere with small talk. Dinner proceeded from course to course with a sombreness that was accentuated rather than dispelled by the faultless waiters, the gleaming napery, cut-glass, and silverware. Florence was beginning to grow uneasy. She turned to Ted with the naïve question :

“Won’t you tell us about your flight through Central Africa? You promised me you would, you know.”

Instantly all eyes were turned toward Ted. One or two of the diners gave Florence a frankly grateful smile, for not every one always met with the success which she did when Ted unhesitatingly complied with her request. Even the taciturn elder Carson forgot himself and his af-

fairs and put in an occasional question, to spur along the story of tropical Africa and superstitious natives. From this, Ted drifted to bits of folk-lore and tribal customs, and it was with obvious reluctance that the women retired to the drawing-room and left him to finish his narration over cigars and coffee with the men.

After dinner there was bridge and dancing, and Mr. Carson, now quite drawn out of his shell, delighted them all with selections on the pipe-organ.

Just before retiring, Florence stood at Viola's door saying her good-nights.

"Would you like to see my gowns?" asked Viola in a confidential tone. "Just came to-day."

What girl ever refuses an invitation to look at pretty things? For a half-hour, Florence stood and reveled in ethereal chiffons, rich velvets, rainbow-tinted silks and satins. Whatever did Viola *do* with so many evening frocks? What happened to them after they had been worn the traditional once?

"What shall you wear to our dance, to-morrow night?" queried Viola, frowning absently over a bouffant *robe de style* of coral pink chiffon-velvet.

Florence flushed. She hated to tell Viola that her emerald frock was all she had, save a little silk dress or two that wouldn't do half so well. But Viola was going on.

"Because, if you haven't set your heart on any special frock of yours, I wish you'd wear this coral one. It is not very becoming to me—I'm too dark for it—and, well, to tell you the truth, it seems just made for you, Florence. Will you wear it? You ought to wear more pink, dear. With your fair hair and skin, you'd be a love in it."

Would she wear it! Florence's protests were so half-hearted that Viola laughed gleefully, and replied by calling Camille to help Florence try on the gown. It was a trifle too long, but that was easily remedied. The fitted bodice needed no alteration, and the full skirt of the rich material fell to the floor in graceful folds which brought out the exquisite lights and shadows of the velvet.

"You look as though you'd just stepped out of a Watteau painting, dear," Viola triumphed. "Truly, you must wear it. Yes, I know that you always wear the short-skirted, girlish things, but a *robe de style* is vastly becoming to you, too!

And no matter how styles come and go, it will always be correct for those who can wear it."

There was little hesitation after that. The mirrored vision of herself, her flushing cheeks competing with the rich color of the gown, was argument enough in itself. When Florence went to her room, she still wore the coral velvet, and Camille followed, carrying the emerald ruffles.

When the maid had left, Florence took the box containing the lovely gown, and laid it on a chair beside her bed where she could reach out and feel its soft folds, while she wondered how it must feel to be able to buy all the pretty things one wanted, regardless of expense.

Next morning, when she woke, she found her bath ready, and every detail of her dressing attended to. It was pleasant to be waited on, to have every want anticipated and attended to before she raised a hand. Again she wondered why Viola ever left home, and how Ted Carson managed to feel at home in the wilds of Africa after a life of such sumptuous ease.

Later, when Ted and Viola were piloting her about the house and gardens, showing her their treasures, she could not help voicing her thought. "I can't see why you ever leave home," she



“YOU LOOK AS THOUGH YOU’D JUST STEPPED OUT OF A
WATTEAU PAINTING.”—Page 125.

sighed, as they turned from a marble swimming pool to enjoy a short canoe ride over the artificial lake at the bottom of the hill. "Why, you have everything, *everything!*"

"Oh no, not quite everything," Ted smiled. "You'd find that out, if you lived here very long." He glanced at his sister, who nodded understandingly, but Florence did not understand at all. To be discontented in a place like this! It did not seem possible.

Viola had shown her dresses to Florence with a matter-of-fact air of indifference, but she displayed an obvious pride in the Carson horses. No need to ask what was Viola's favorite diversion. They took a ride into the hills that very afternoon, Viola on her Lightning, and Florence on her Snow Queen.

On the homeward gallop the breeze dislodged Florence's hat, and, with only a backward glance, she let it sail away on the wind. Her hair began to loosen and tumble down, but she was bound not to interrupt this splendid gallop. She came dashing down the Carson drive on her beautiful mount, her hair streaming in the wind, her eyes and cheeks aglow with health and the joy of being alive. A young man rose from a marble seat

in the garden and came forward to help her dismount.

"Florence, this is Mr. Wimbleton," Viola smiled, drawing rein beside them, "Miss Essex, Mr. Wimbleton." Viola's eyes were twinkling. "Flo dear, you see what an impression you and your dashing white steed have made on Louis? He's going home and paint a picture of you, right now. I can see it in his eyes."

Florence looked up into the pale, almost effeminate face, crowned with hair as blond and curly as her own. He reminded her of the pictures she had seen of Shelley; his eyes had that same far-away, unworldly look. A man must be an artist, or a poet, to look like that.

"You paint?" she queried interestedly.

The artist nodded. "Viola is right," he added earnestly. "I was thinking what a picture you and your white horse would make, had I the talent to put it on canvas. If I were at all successful at portraits, I should ask your permission to try."

Florence was a little disconcerted by his frankly admiring stare, and yet there was nothing bold about his glance. He might have regarded a sunset, or a lovely landscape, with the

same dispassionate gaze. His very earnestness seemed to take the absurdity out of his effeminate graces and poetic expressions. Yet, how different he was from boyish Rob, or energetic Ted!

That night Florence wore the coral velvet gown, her only ornaments a single strand of pearls and a dainty French corsage. With Camille's help, she had piled her lustrous hair in waves atop her head, with ringlets hanging loose in back, approved colonial style. Viola exclaimed happily, and repeated "I told you so!" half a dozen times before she proudly led her young guest to the hall below to stand beside her in the receiving line.

It was a lovely memory, that night at the Carson reception. Florence had more partners than she could accommodate; she found herself splitting her dances that she might have an opportunity to know and talk with as many as possible of these interesting friends of Viola. Ted Carson claimed his due as host, but Louis Wimbledon stood off from the crowd to enjoy the gay picture with his beauty-loving eyes; he danced with no one but his hostess and the guest of honor.

That night, Florence went to sleep with her

fingers resting lovingly on the folds of the coral gown, and girl-like, began to build dreams, in which a manly face, scarred by experience, flitted beside a smiling, boyish one which resembled Betty's.

The velvet gown was put in Florence's trunk, but not without a great deal of argument and protest on her part.

"Don't talk about it any more," Viola said petulantly. "If you don't take it, I shall give it to one of the servants to make sofa cushions out of. Now be a dear, and stop arguing. You just put it on, and let your mother see you in it, and she won't have a word to say. There's a love; now let's forget it and go for a drive. I've a dreadful headache."

Florence never did find out just how Viola persuaded Mrs. Essex to accept the expensive gift, but she was not surprised. Viola could be wheedling in the most charming way. She came out of the room after her conference with Mrs. Essex, smiling triumphantly, despite the evident fact that there had been some discussion.

"The dress is yours, Florence," she announced calmly, "and I want to tell you that your mother

is one of the loveliest women I have ever met.”

Viola frankly enjoyed her week-end with the Essexes, and, when at the end of her stay, she was recalling the informal joys of her visit with the summary exclamation, “What an ideal way to live!” she said it with such hearty sincerity that it set Florence to wondering. She, too, had thought her home life in Santa Barbara “an ideal way to live,” but her visit to the luxurious villa of the Carsons had bred doubts and aroused longings for heretofore unthought-of things. Viola’s hint of discontent perplexed her more than ever.

CHAPTER XI

SPRING TERM

Two Freshmen rose early the first Monday of spring term, tired though they were after the previous day's journey, and hurried down to the campus to be first among the "old students" registering.

"Doesn't that phrase elevate your self-respect?" Betty inquired proudly. "And isn't it good to see all these new Freshmen running around as helpless as we were last semester?"

"Here! We don't allow infants to talk like that," warned Jerry, coming up. "Remember that you are just learning to walk yourself, and that these helpless victims of your scorn will have the same class numerals as you!"

Betty subsided while Jerry walked away, but she looked at her orange registration card with satisfaction. "Just the same, I'm glad that we haven't blue cards any more. We might be Seniors, for all the color of our cards will tell the world."

"It does make one feel something like an old-timer," laughed Florence. "Here come Louise

and some of the Alpha Sophomores." She smiled as they turned away from the registration desk and hurried toward the gymnasium.

"Who is that with Shirley?" Betty asked.

"The dark one is her cousin. Didn't you meet her? She stayed at the House last night. I think that she and the other Freshman are prospective pledges."

"Then we'll meet them at dinner to-night. Are you dreading the mock-initiation, Flo? I am."

"Not—not much," Florence faltered. "I suppose it will be fun."

"Not for *us*." Betty was emphatically skeptical.

"Well, they won't kill us," Florence remarked, with doubtful optimism. "Let's go over to the glade and sign up for Partheneia."

"Me! Partheneia!" Betty's meaning was unmistakable, without the assistance of grammar.

"What makes you think you can't dance?" Florence challenged. "You have never tried. I haven't had much pageantry work either, but I'm sure we both have as good a chance as some of those that are crowding around the tables."

Betty opportunely remembered a scolding from

the upperclass contingent of the house, relative to representation in activities as well as in scholarship, and waited very quietly while Florence allowed her fancy to picture the colorful pageants that had taken place among the oaks in Faculty Glade.

"It is just the place for dryads and fairies to frolic," she commented dreamily. "Betty, you, with your nixie brown face, would make a cunning dryad. Miss Wendall says there are to be twenty-five of them."

"The cow that we met on the Big C trail had a nice brown face, too," Betty observed candidly, but she signed up, nevertheless.

"Only one solo," a young lady beside them remarked. "I suppose the famous Lucille will get that. She's been studying with Alkoff for several years now."

"I think she means Lucille Dova," Florence conjectured, as she and Betty strolled away. "I do hope she gets it. You know her, don't you? That lovely blonde Senior, with the straight, bobbed hair? I've always wanted to see her dance."

They had reached the athletic field and joined the crowd at the bulletin-boards, to contemplate

a bewildering array of sports lists—canoeing, tennis, fencing, swimming, baseball, riding,—how was one to choose? They both signed for an impossible program of sports, laughingly informing the manager that they would begin eliminating as soon as their study schedules were definitely arranged.

The work and play of spring term soon began in earnest. There were long hours of laboratory work, relieved by a period on the athletic field or in the swimming pool; there were early morning risings, to finish a paper that was due or to memorize an oral report; there were busy committees on decoration for the “Freshie Glee,” or some formal occasion at the House; there were costume jinxes and carnivals.

“If we’re this busy as Freshmen, what will it be like when we are Seniors?” wondered Florence, as she and Betty dashed after a Lake Merritt car full of middy-clad girls.

“We ought to be used to it by then,” laughed Betty. “You’re not getting tired of canoeing, are you?” she added, after they had wedged themselves into the only available space on the car.

"Tired of it! Why, I wouldn't miss it for anything. Look, Betty, I believe that's Sadie Erna ahead of us. She's wearing a middy, too. Do you suppose she's out for canoeing?"

Betty glanced ahead. "It looks like it," she said. "I wonder how she manages to have the time. She is always in such a rush."

"Her Senior Advisor probably persuaded her to try a little play as well as work. I'm glad. Sadie gets so little fun out of life, it seems."

They watched Sadie that evening on the lake, and marveled at her dexterous stroke. It was evident that Sadie took her canoeing as she did everything else in life—with the utmost seriousness.

"Look at her!" exclaimed Florence. "She sends her canoe through the water straight as an arrow. I wonder—you know, Betty,—I think there's something fine about that girl—if she'd only give herself a chance. Look! Did you ever see such a quick and graceful turn? She'll paddle in the regatta, or I'm very much mistaken."

"She wouldn't, even if she had the chance," Betty observed, and hastily changed the subject. "I wish the Sophs could come the same day as we," she sighed. "Wouldn't you like to race

Marceil Adams, Flo? They say she's the swiftest stroke of the whole squad."

"She ought to be, after having negotiated the roughest rivers in New England," said Florence. "Lake Merritt must seem like a mill-pond to her."

"It's pretty choppy *here*, sometimes," protested Betty, glancing up at the clear, February sky. "Wait till May, when the old trade-winds come sweeping up the estuary. *Then* you can see how much fun it is to paddle in rough water."

Florence's eyes were still following Sadie's swiftly gliding canoe, now far ahead of them. "I believe she's a better stroke than either of us, Betty. Let's ask her to race us, next time."

"Doubles? Against her single?" asked Betty, astonished.

"No, all three paddling single."

"All right, but she probably won't. Milady Erna is not the 'mixing' kind. Look at her, way off by herself. She didn't even stop at the coach's stand."

They had no chance to challenge Sadie that evening, for she reached the wharf long before they did, and was probably well on her way home by the time that they boarded a Berkeley-bound

trolley. Florence was determined, however, and she puzzled deeply over her engagements for the next canoeing day, willing to sacrifice most anything for the sake of drawing Sadie Erna into closer relationship with her colleagues, and really anxious, besides, to try her mettle against Sadie's skilful stroke.

But there was something else to think about, that week-end. On Friday, the Freshmen neophytes of Gamma Zeta had just finished a strenuous day of initiation trials. Having risen early and served tray breakfasts to all the upperclassmen in the house, and having been at the beck and call of their sisters for every other conceivable service during the day, they felt that they now deserved a rest, and dinner. Florence, who had been especially conspicuous with her long hair flying like that of a ten-year-old, was eager to get it dressed comfortably before dinner.

"Oh, you haven't finished yet, children," called Shirley Graham, mistress of ceremonies. "Betty may go and make herself presentable, as she is to wait on table for our sorority neighbor across the street, but Florence,—just a minute, please."

Florence stifled a weary sigh, and stood waiting to see what was to happen next.

“Here,” said Shirley, stepping out from the group of solemn upperclassmen, “with this fifty-cent-piece between you and starvation, you are being sent out into ‘the cruel, cold world,’” she shook her head impressively, “in quest of adventure. Knowing your admiration for people who achieve adventures out of the ordinary, we hereby command you to fare forth and produce one yourself—in three hours! Be back at eight o’clock sharp, to undergo the tortures we have devised to test your endurance.”

There was an ominous silence at the end of this speech, although a smile lurked on more than one face as Florence glanced longingly toward the dining-room, and slowly turned away. As soon as she had closed the door, they ran to the window in a merry group, and watched her stroll down the street.

“Poor kiddie, she does look tired and hungry,” observed Shirley. “I feel so heartless!”

“But she has fifty cents,” Jerry argued. “She won’t starve, and she can rest while she’s eating.”

They turned their attention to Betty, who was solemnly instructed to don cap and apron and to run across the street to offer her services as

waitress. They giggled as she sped across in the conspicuous uniform and was promptly admitted to the forewarned sorority neighbor.

"We'll let the other Freshmen wait on *us*," Jerry suggested. "Now we must worry away the time until Flo and Betty come back and tell us all about it. Lou, let's work on Economics. I haven't even started my paper."

"You haven't! Mine was finished long ago. Don't you realize that they are due on Monday?"

"'Deed I do, but I have been racking my brain for weeks, and I can't think of a subject on which I can get any first-hand information."

"You had better get busy then," Louise advised. "It took me two days to visit the places I wrote about;—and three thousand words isn't what you would call a short paper, Jerry."

"Oh, that part doesn't worry me. The words will come fast enough, if only I can think of a subject. Oh me! My quest has been ten times as hard as Florence's."

She went upstairs, still groaning, and Louise found her in her room, an hour later, with a full fountain pen poised helplessly over a blank sheet of paper.

"No inspiration yet, Jerry?"

“Not a thing, and I’ve thought until my head aches. Oh, that gong is a welcome sound! Perhaps my brain will work better after I’ve had some nourishment.”

Betty came in at seven o’clock, obviously trying to conceal smiles of happiness. The girls coming out of the dining-room were perplexed. Had those Alpha girls gone and given her a good time instead of treating her with the “contempt” due an initiate?

“Tell us about it, you traitor!” they commanded.

“It wasn’t *all* pleasant,” the accused promptly assured them. “They had about a thousand courses.”

“More or less,” modified Jerry.

“And they were so covered with fancy sauces and decorations that I didn’t know what half of them were, or when they should be served. Nobody enlightened me, either. The girls were as solemn and snobbish as peacocks, until I brought in some kind of baked oysters for dessert. That was too much for them. They all laughed, and acted quite natural after that. Really, it had been like an inquest. Well, after they had made

me pass around the biggest crockery bowl in the house for a finger-bowl, they began to treat me wonderfully. One took my cap, and another my apron, and they sat me down at a cleared table and showed me how to serve that banquet. All twenty of them waited on me. I don't know everything I ate, but it was all so good! And I felt like a princess with those twenty girls all at my service. Too bad you didn't send Florence. She would have been too flustered to eat a thing, but *I* had a lovely time!"

Shirley was not to have her plans so disrespected. She quieted Betty's exuberance with a solemn, "Don't appear too happy, child. For every smile you indulge in now, you'll shed a tear or two, to-night!"

The other girls pulled their faces into decorous lines as Jerry sombrely added, "This is a very solemn occasion, Sister Arclift."

The clock chimed eight, and every neophyte was back, save one. There was still no sign of Florence.

"You don't suppose that anything could have happened to her?" Ruth Lincoln worried, half an hour later. "She is so conscientious that she

would surely make every effort to be back here on time."

"Perhaps, like Betty, she found such an interesting time that she forgot all about having to be back."

"No, Florence would not forget, especially after all the warnings we gave her."

"Perhaps she is still searching for an adventure."

In spite of their light-heartedness, a wave of anxiety began to sweep over the girls when, at quarter to nine, the recruit was still absent. Something *might* have happened. At Mrs. Preston's request, two girls went out to see if they could determine anything of her whereabouts. They returned thirty minutes later with "Rob Arclift saw her coming out of 'The Varsity,'" as their only piece of news. This was of no particular help, and every member of the House assembled in a worried group in the living-room.

"What had we better do?" They turned toward Mrs. Preston, who was trying her best to hide her own uneasiness.

"Telephone the police," suggested Betty seriously, thus eliciting a nervous giggle. "How can you laugh?" she inquired with tearful reproach,

“when you know that Florence is lost, or drowned, or something?”

Jeanette put a comforting arm about her and said, smiling confidently, “I don’t think we should allow ourselves to become so upset. It’s likely that she is detained for some trivial reason, and will bob up in her usual fashion, any minute now.” That was reassuring, but it did not entirely dispel the uneasiness.

“Let’s wait another fifteen minutes,” the house-mother suggested quietly. “If she isn’t here by that time—we—we must make some definite effort to find out where she went.”

“We might call up the Emergency Hospital and ask if there has been any accident.” This suggestion from Betty caused even the most sanguine countenances to pale.

“Did she wear a coat?” some one abruptly inquired. “It is getting quite chilly, and she had on a thin, silk dress.”

“I don’t think she did wear a coat,” Betty answered. “Wait a minute, I’ll run up and see if one of her coats is missing.”

Most of the other girls, for want of something better to do, straggled after her. Betty stopped short before the open door of her room, while

the others crowded impatiently upon her to look over her shoulder.

“Florence! You perfectly ridiculous!” they heard her exclaim in hysterical relief, and they shoved her into the room, in their own eagerness to enter.

CHAPTER XII

IN QUEST OF ADVENTURE

THEIR eyes beheld a sight which *was* ridiculous when contrasted with the pictures they had been trying to shove out of their worried minds. In the centre of the bed sat Florence, her wind-blown hair and rosy cheeks testifying to the fact that she had just come in. From her shoulders to her slippared feet, she was one mass of—kittens! The furry balls clawed at her collar, they played with her hair and bit her ears, they fought in her lap, they climbed over her feet,—black, white, spotted,—all the miscellaneous varieties of kittenhood.

“Aren’t they dear?” she inquired innocently, holding up one of the chubbiest for inspection.

“Florence Essex!” Betty began to scold, but it ended in a burst of relieved laughter.

“Where on earth did you get them?”

“What are you going to do with them?”

“Where have you been all this time?”

“What happened?”

The rest of the girls had been attracted to the

scene by this time, and the questions tumbled over each other.

"They are my *adventure*," Florence replied calmly. "I thought I would have a chance to steal up here and put ribbons on their necks before showing them to you, but you've gone and spoiled it all. It doesn't matter much, though," she sighed, regarding a much chewed and tattered bit of pink ribbon. "They don't appreciate my efforts to beautify them."

"But what are you going to do with them?"

"Where have you been?"

"Where did you get them?" The volley began again.

"One at a time, please! As for what I'm going to do with them,—don't you think they would be nice pets to have about the house?" This, with the utmost seriousness.

"You absurd child!" Mother Preston sat down, after a vain attempt to embrace any part of Florence that was not covered with kittens. "Do tell us about it," she requested gently. "We have been worried."

"Really? I'm so sorry!" exclaimed the culprit sincerely, "but you will forgive me, won't you? I couldn't help it, you know."

"After we've heard your story," Shirley conceded, resuming her dictatorial manner.

Florence settled herself comfortably among the girls and kittens. "I went out to find an adventure," she began.

"And came back with several," interrupted a Sophomore, who was promptly subdued by a Senior near by.

"I sallied forth," Florence resumed in traditional style, "into the unknown wilds of Berkeley, and kept my eyes open, but there was ne'er a sign of adventure. I met several ordinary-looking students, plodding home from the library, and also some ordinary-looking professors, plotting more burdens for the weary students. In fact, the campus and the general atmosphere were as ordinary as ever. I was getting a little discouraged, but I was very hungry, so decided to dispose of at least part of that fifty cents before proceeding further.

"The 'Varsity' was so crowded that I came out without having eaten anything. Just as I was contemplating 'The Sandwich Shop,' I heard a voice. Lo! There was Adventure calling me!" She paused dramatically, but was prodded until she hastily resumed her narrative.

“Adventure! There he was, in the form of a shabby little boy about ten years old. He had wistful brown eyes that you just couldn’t resist, and so I asked him what he wanted.

“‘Kin I do any errands for ya, Ma’am?’ he asked me very politely. ‘I gotta get fifty cents afore dinner time.’

“My unappeased appetite, and the fact that I couldn’t think of any errand for him to do caused me to answer a heartless ‘No, I’m afraid not,’ but his disappointment brought about an immediate change of heart. I told him that I didn’t know of anything he could do for me, and asked him if he had anything to sell.

“He scuffed the sidewalk a minute with a shoe that could very ill afford such treatment. ‘Yes’m,’ he finally said. ‘Wanna come and see what I have to sell?’

“I was for following Adventure, as you know, and so I told him to lead the way. He certainly did fly, and I kept up with him as best I could. He told me that his name was Jakie Something-or-other-that-I-can’t-pronounce.”

“That’s a good name!” Another Sophomore was disciplined by a Senior close by.

“He further explained,” the narrator went on,

“that his mother had given him fifty cents for provisions, that morning, that he had lost it, and hadn’t dared to go home without replacing it.”

“And the poor little fellow had been running around all day trying to earn a half-dollar?”

“Yes,” Florence nodded. “That made me forget that I was hungry. Well, after we had walked for miles, Jakie brought me to a queer little narrow street where all the houses were exactly alike. They resembled a double row of boxes with windows and doors cut in them,—a factory settlement, I guess.

“Jakie was very nervous as we entered one of the boxes. He signaled me to be very quiet as I followed him down a tiny, dark hallway. He stopped at a door and cautiously opened it, then stepped into the room boldly, telling me to ‘come right along in,’ his ‘maw’ wasn’t home from the factory yet.

“You should have seen that kitchen. It was the dirtiest *I* have ever seen. There were soiled clothes over everything, heaps of trash on the chairs and in the corners, soot on the one tiny window.”

At this point, several listeners gingerly dropped the kittens that they had petted to sleep,

and edged away from the narrator. Florence's eyes twinkled.

"Jakie brought a nice *clean* basket from somewhere outside, and it was filled with ——"

"Adventures," supplied Ruth.

"Yes, lively ones," agreed Florence, vainly trying to remove one of them from the back of her neck.

"The poor little things were all pining for liberty, and—to make a long story short—I yielded to Jakie's evident desire to get me out of the house before his mother should come back, paid the fifty cents, and started to depart with my purchase when Mrs.—Mrs. Unpronounceable came in.

"The first thing she saw was me,—I mean the first person she saw was I. She looked puzzled, and stood wondering whether or not she had stepped into the wrong box, but finally reassured herself by studying the way her chairs were draped."

"What was she like?" Jerry interrupted.

"She was short and dark, with black, stringy hair. Her eyes were large and would have been beautiful except for an expression of almost cynical hopelessness. Well—about the time that

she decided that she was in her own box, *I* decided that I had better be starting home. I left Jakie to explain my presence and departed. It was as dark and gloomy as a graveyard at midnight. There were factories on every side, and dark, narrow alleys. Not until a great big be-whiskered foreigner stopped to stare at me, did I realize that I had no carfare. I began to run, but before I had proceeded very far, one of those precious kittens fell out of the basket. I couldn't let the little thing wander friendless in the streets, so of course I had to stop and catch him. That took about fifteen minutes.

"Everything went peacefully until one furry head managed to pop the cover off, and then I had to scramble after three animals. It was like that all the way home," she sighed, amidst the laughter that followed the vision of Florence frantically trying to run in every direction at once, after the scurrying kittens.

"But the saddest part is yet to come," she murmured solemnly. "I dropped the whole basket, just as I was passing the Hiawatha Club, —and all the boys were out on the front porch!" Uproar. "They very gallantly helped me to rescue them all—the kittens, I mean ——"

“The kittens helped you to rescue the boys?” from a facetious Junior.

“The boys helped me rescue the kittens,” Florence elucidated carefully, “all except one, and he was the fluffiest, brownest, prettiest kitty in the lot. Mark Hendrix said he was going to keep him for a football mascot, because he looks a little like a Golden Bear!” More shouts. “He did keep him, too, and informed me with the utmost seriousness that he was going to bring up that kitten to think that he was a bear. Think of that!”

“You got rid of one, anyway,” Shirley managed to say, after the mirth had died down. “What are you going to do with the rest of the creatures?”

“Give them to me,” suggested Sidney Cartwright. “I can use them in the Zoölogy Laboratory.”

At this, the adventurer hastily gathered every sprawling bit into her protecting arms. “No, no, no!” she objected energetically.

“Of course not,” Mrs. Preston comforted. Florence was looking really alarmed. “I suggest that you give one to each of the girls who would like to send him home, or to some friend.”

That plan was more appealing to the kitten-rescuer.

"Now, may I give them some milk?" she pleaded artfully. "I'm sure they're hungry."

"And what about yourself!" With many exclamations of concern, the girls gathered up both Florence and the kittens.

Ten minutes later, she sat at a dining-room table heaped with good things, every girl anxious to wait on her. The kittens clustered in a furry circle on the floor beside her, their tiny tails pointed straight up in the air as they lapped up a great bowl of milk.

"You must visit that place with me to-morrow, Flo darling," said Jerry. "It is just the inspiration I need for my Economics paper."

The girls seemed to vie with one another in bestowing superlatives and terms of endearment.

"What a very pleasant kind of torture," Florence remarked with a roguish smile as the clock chimed ten-thirty, and she realized that another half-hour would mean "lights out," and the end of mock-initiation day.

The effects of Florence's adventure were far-reaching. Jakie's mother, as a result of the girls'

interest, was installed as caretaker in an apartment house where she promptly demonstrated the fact that she *could* keep house, when she had the time. Nine different homes in various parts of the state opened their doors to the shelterless kittens.

The girls were as eager as Florence to keep "just one," the only point of debate being the question of which one it was to be. As each girl had her own opinion, the discussion was becoming hot and animated, when Mrs. Preston tactfully suggested that Florence was the logical person to do the choosing. Even then, they were as far from a decision as ever. Florence changed her mind so often that they began to fear they would have to keep them all, when Mark Hendrix abruptly settled the problem by sauntering up the walk with his kidnapped mascot cuddled contentedly on his shoulder.

"I'm making a heart-breaking sacrifice, bringing this little fellow back," he began, as Florence laughingly took the bundle of fur into her arms, "but our Chinese cook told us he would as soon have the devil around. He even threatened to leave us if we didn't get rid of the cat. He is a good cook," sighed Mark, "and so I had

to make the sacrifice for the sake of some twenty-five appetites."

"Thank you so much! You knew that I wanted him, didn't you?"

"Don't thank me. Thank Ah Yong," Mark evaded.

The girls clustered around the new arrivals, but, although they tried to give Mark his due as a peace-bringer and as a prominent football man besides, it is to be feared that the fluffy "Goldie" claimed a greater share of their attention.

The first day after the true initiation ceremony, Florence and Betty hurried to their nine o'clock classes, proudly conscious of the fact that their pledge badges had been replaced by the pearl-studded pin which announced that they were members of Gamma Zeta.

"Aren't you glad that we can go to House-meeting, instead of spending our time absorbing rules and campus sentiments?" Betty asked.

Florence nodded. "And we have all those beautiful ideals to call our own," she added. "I shall never forget that lovely ceremony."

"Nor I," added Betty. "It was compensation for all that we suffered Friday, although you and

your frisky kittens saved us the worst of the mock-initiation."

"I felt rather guilty to disappoint the girls that way, but Shirley told me not to worry, as she had not had time to arrange a very original program, anyway."

"I'm sure that they derived more amusement from those dear, silly little animals than they would ever have from us," Betty observed, and they laughed in reminiscence of the uproar that had continued until the last kitten, excepting Goldie, had been sent off.

CHAPTER XIII

PARTHENEIA

“WHAT’S the matter, Flo?” Marceil asked, taking a seat beside her in the Physiology lecture-room. “What are you cogitating about so deeply?”

“I was just trying to figure out how to arrange a Partheneia tryout and canoeing. They both come at the same time. I suppose you would advise me to drop Partheneia.”

“Not to-day,” Marceil answered without hesitation. “It is too windy for canoeing, and it is getting ready to rain, besides. Methinks that that damsel in front, with the new spring bonnet, is going to come to grief before the day is over.”

As Marceil prophesied, the weather made a choice unnecessary, for that day, at least, and Florence, anxious to continue both activities as long as possible, was glad that the weather proved so accommodating. The gymnasium was filled with talkative, excited girls when she and Betty arrived there, just in time to escape the downpour which Marceil had predicted.

"Roll-call is in the main gym. Hurry and get into your suits," called a committee girl.

"Now that you have had a little folk-dancing, don't you feel more confident?" asked Florence, pulling a pair of ballet slippers from her locker.

"Not much," Betty responded in discouraging tones. "I'm no fairy like you, Flo. Remember the hard time Miss Wendall had with me and the polka step?"

"But you learned it, just the same. I don't think the tryouts will be hard."

"Easy enough for a willowy blonde, but a scrubby thing like me will last about five minutes in these elimination contests. You don't realize all I am doing for your sweet sake," Betty ended ruefully, as she entered her dressing-room.

They both found that they could last much longer than five minutes, even while the painful elimination process was going on all around them. It was fun, proceeding from a simple step to a more complicated one. A feeling of triumph accompanied the successful completion of each. At the end of the tryout, Miss Wendall read the names of the successful competitors. Arclift and Essex headed the list.

"To think that I survived the whole pre-

liminary!" Betty boasted with humorous bravado. "Aren't you proud of me, Flo? I can see that there is no doubt as to *your* fate. You are destined to stay on to the bitter end. I'll keep you company for a minute or two of the next competition."

The second day proved to be more exciting than the first. The elimination of one hundred girls left the floor less crowded, and, here and there, a group diligently practised *arabesques* and *pas de basques*, while others talked nervously or tapped the floor with slippered feet. Each girl wore an expression of anxiety or of increased hopefulness, according to the individual temperament.

"This is my Waterloo," declared Betty with cheerful conviction. "Florence, when you see one of the judges give me a friendly tap on the shoulder, you can smile *au revoir*. I'll run home and save you some dinner."

"I'm afraid I'll not get any dinner, if I depend on that. Besides, I'm just as likely to be going home early, myself!"

The "friendly taps on the shoulder" were less frequent, this time. Only occasionally did a girl leave her place on the floor, one grinning cheer-

fully, in spite of her defeat, another wearing a look of hurt disappointment.

“I was so busy feeling sorry for that red-haired girl that I forgot all about myself,” declared Betty, after they had managed to live through the second tryout.

“Some girls do seem hurt when they are eliminated,” Florence mused, “and I suppose that the longer you survive, the greater the disappointment is. Still, it’s fun, isn’t it?”

This sort of “fun” continued for three weeks, each time the girls becoming more fearful that the next tryout would be their last. So it was with a mixture of hope and anxiety that they, at length, greeted Miss Wendall’s announcement.

“There will be no more eliminations after today. The class hour from now on will be devoted to placing you in your appropriate groups, and practising the dances themselves.”

The strains of the waltz from “Faust” filled the room, and a group of twenty girls formed on the floor and began to glide about.

“One waltz step, and *arabesque*,” Miss Wendall called, and the resultant execution by these selected dancers was a not ungraceful sight.

“That is Lucille Dova, the one that kicks the

back of her head," Florence whispered, during a rest. "She has on toe-slippers, too."

"It's evident," Betty said, critically, "she is going to lose her chance at the solo, if she displays too many Russian acrobatics."

Betty's feeling was reflected in Florence. She found herself a little disappointed in Lucille, not because she was not a gifted dancer, but because Lucille was showing poor taste in her elaboration of every simple step. She was displaying technical skill at the expense of art.

"She is lovely, too, and just the type for the solo," her Freshman admirer reflected. "I do hope she won't go and spoil her chance!"

The music began again. The judges strolled about in the usual businesslike manner, keeping every member of that swaying group in suspense, and causing (as Florence afterwards expressed it) "extreme palpitation of the heart" whenever they drew near.

At a signal from Miss Wendall, the music changed to a rollicking, tripping tempo, and the girls made a parallel change in their movements. Florence could not resist the spirit of the joyous rhythm, and she leaped and skipped about in happy abandon. She forgot about the critical

eyes upon her, and gave herself up to the intoxication of movement that the rippling music inspired. It was, therefore, somewhat of a shock to be stopped, even by the sympathetically smiling Miss Wendall. Half dazed, Florence listened to the words, "You may go now, Miss Essex. Come to my office at three on Friday."

Wonderingly, she left the room, catching a glimpse of Betty's nonplused face as she sped by.

"Eliminated! And on the very last day, too!" her thoughts ran, as she dressed hurriedly. She had believed that she would not care, but she did care. "I was so happy, and I was having such a good time! I wish she hadn't stopped me right in the middle of the music."

She forced back the tears that tried to come, and when she greeted Betty, half an hour later, she was able to smile courageously.

"Congratulations, Betty! I just knew that you were fated to become a cunning little dryad. Didn't I tell you?"

But Betty's face wore a thundercloud expression quite inappropriate to one in a congratulatory position. "Flo, don't! There must be some mistake! Or else Miss Wendall has gone out of

her head. No sane person would eliminate you, and keep me on."

"Oh, I'm just like the rest, and 'must go when my time comes,' " Florence quoted absurdly.

"But I don't understand," persisted Betty. "Did she give any reason for not passing you? Maybe your type doesn't suit any part, or something like that."

"It's dear of you to be so concerned," Florence said appreciatively. "Don't bother thinking of it any more. I'll find out what was the matter when I go to see her, Friday."

"She had better have a mighty good reason, or I'll never forgive her," vowed Betty.

The news of Florence's elimination was received with incredulous cries by her sorority sisters, who had firm faith in her ability.

"But it *is* true!" Florence repeated for the tenth time, hoping that they would stop talking about it once they were convinced. "Ask Betty."

Betty tragically assured them that it was so. Miss Wendall herself had asked Florence to leave the floor, and *she* was the chief judge.

"And she is a dancer, and knows what she wants,—or rather, what she doesn't want!" With this declaration, Florence hushed the storm

of protest that rose against her much admired instructor.

“Anyhow, it means that you won’t have to give up canoeing,” Marceil exulted. “Practice races from now on, too, and you won’t have to miss the best part of the fun.”

“From what I hear, you may have a chance to paddle 19— to victory in the spring regatta,” Sidney added. “A little more strength on that speed stroke, Florence, and you’re going to surprise them all!”

“And Florence,” Ruth Lincoln called, “both Rob Arclift and Mark Hendrix called up to invite you to the Prytanean fête. Rob called first,” she added, twinkling.

With these and many more cheery “don’t you cares,” the girls of the House comforted their disappointed sister and made her happy again. And there was that race with Sadie to look forward to! Yes, spring was bound to bring showers, but there was plenty of sunshine, too!

CHAPTER XIV

A DAY OF TRIUMPHS

IT began with the morning mail which brought to Florence two letters, one from Louis Wimbeldon, telling of a successful exhibition of his paintings, another from Ted Carson, who had just won a long-sought commission to South America.

"You are not the only one who got some mail," a flippant voice called from the stairway. "Do you know what has happened to our Shirley Graham? She is hiding, but she needn't think that I'm going to let her keep the good news all to herself," Jerry finished.

"What, did she get a love letter?" Florence returned, with equal flippancy.

"Oh, nothing so common as that; she gets stacks of those. Guess again."

"Do tell us," begged Florence. "I hate to be kept in suspense."

"An invitation to join the San Francisco Symphony," Betty hazarded.

"No, though I shouldn't be surprised if that would be forthcoming, too, one of these days."

“Tell us!” demanded Betty, poising a volume of Tennyson, threateningly.

“Lay down your arms. I surrender!” cried Jerry dramatically, but she paused until the volume of Tennyson became poised again.

“Shirley Graham has just proved to the world that it is possible to be a wonderful musician and a first-class University student, at the same time.”

“But how?”

“By being elected to Phi Beta Kappa, national scholastic honor society,” Jerry announced impressively.

“Our Shirley!” exclaimed Florence happily.

“Yes, our Shirley,—eminent scholar and musician—as the papers of the future will say.”

“Let’s go up and find her, Flo.” The two Freshmen disappeared up the stairs.

“Shirley Graham, what do you mean by hiding your Phi Beta brain behind your fiddle all this time?” Betty demanded, as soon as they entered the room.

“Especially when these practical people like Betty think it impossible to be anything sensible, if you are artistic,” added Florence mischievously.

Shirley laughed. "That's one reason I am happy about it. So many people think I am just wasting my time at college."

Five other girls bounced into the room, and Shirley was compelled to undergo more bearish congratulations. "An extra special spread for you to-night, young lady," House-Manager Sidney Cartwright announced, as though she were delivering a life sentence.

"And an impromptu party after dinner," added the chairman of the social committee. "I'll telephone the Lambda boys to come over and help."

"Now children, leave her in peace. *I* want to talk to her," ordered Ruth Lincoln, who already wore the Phi Beta Kappa key.

"In pieces, you mean," giggled Shirley's Freshman cousin, one of the newest Gamma Zeta pledges, as they reluctantly left the room. Congratulations were renewed at lunch time, when the girls, whom Shirley had managed to elude thus far, pounced upon her.

"Now you must let me alone just a minute, *please*," she begged, when they followed her to the living-room after lunch. "One of the girls in my English class has a poem in the 'Scribbler,'

and I want to read it before I see her this afternoon." She picked up the magazine and opened it.

"What's this?" darting an accusing look in Jerry's direction. That young lady tried to escape, but she was firmly held by Florence on one side, and by Louise on the other. "I'm not the only one to be congratulated," Shirley continued, in a relieved tone. "Look at this, if you please!" She held up the book, opened to the first page on which shone the title—"Gray Mist," a story, "by Geraldine W. Fay."

The scramble this time was in Jerry's direction, and the girls beheld the most unusual sight of that particular Sophomore flushed, and very much embarrassed.

"To-day has been so full of pleasant surprises," sighed Florence, hurrying to keep her three o'clock appointment with Miss Wendall, "and here am *I* on my way to find out why I was a failure."

At the office door she hesitated. "I'd almost rather not know," she told herself, and stood for a moment debating whether or not to knock. "If only she hadn't asked me to come!" Reluctant to have the continual good news of the

day spoiled by being reminded of her own disappointment, she was strongly tempted to turn away, when Miss Wendall came across the gymnasium floor.

"Oh, I'm sorry! Have you been waiting long, Miss Essex?" she called pleasantly.

"Not at all," Florence assured her, following the instructor into her office. "Miss Wendall," she began impulsively, "I've had so much good news to-day, you aren't going to spoil it, are you? I'd just as soon not know why I failed."

"Why you failed! What do you mean?"

"Partheneia, you know you told me to come and see you. I thought maybe you were going to tell me why I was eliminated."

A wave of comprehension passed over Miss Wendall's face, and, to Florence's amazement, she threw back her head and laughed merrily. "You poor dear, did you think you were eliminated?" she asked, laying a sympathetic hand on her pupil's.

"Of course! Isn't it so?" Florence's astonishment was good to see.

"No-o-o! It was stupid of me to give you that impression. I see how it happened, though. Don't you know, dear," she asked, with a twinkle

of amusement, "that we don't usually bother explaining matters to eliminated people? We are heartless enough to let them draw their own conclusions.—And you thought you had failed?" There was only sincere apology in her tone this time. "I *am* sorry. You must have been dreadfully disappointed. That's too bad, and yet it is amusing, too. But it is all right now, because you know that you are *not* eliminated." She paused to smile at Florence's expression.

Florence was still certain that there must be some mistake. "I—I don't understand!" she gasped.

"Evidently!" laughed Miss Wendall. "Well, I'll tell you. I made up my mind about you long ago, but feared that the girls would think it unfair if you didn't go through all the tryouts as they did. Besides, the dramatic coach was at the last tryout, and I wanted him to agree with me as to the final selection of dancers. I had already placed you, mentally, and so, the minute that he was convinced that you were the one for this particular part, I stopped you. I thought that, inasmuch as it was the final, I could do you the kindness of letting you go home early, without arousing ill feeling in the other competitors.

You didn't appreciate my good intentions, did you?" she laughed.

"I'm truly sorry that I didn't."

"You couldn't very well, when you didn't even suspect them. Now, as to your part. There is only one logical place for you in this year's pageant, and that is in the rôle of Happiness. Coach Engle and I promptly agreed that you were just made for that part."

Florence's eyes flew wide open. "But isn't that the solo?"

"Yes." Miss Wendall was regarding the manuscript. "It is the only solo this year—'a dance of natural, spontaneous abandon,'" she read. "We played a little trick on you all, introducing the Happiness music directly after the slow, legato movement. We wanted to see how it would affect each individual. Without a hint as to what I thought, I waited for Coach Engle's decision. 'There's the girl we want,' he said, nodding toward you. 'There is not another in the room who so thoroughly gets the spirit of that music.'"

"And that is when you stopped me? You were saying all those nice things when I thought you were being sorry for me!"

“We certainly did not think that our prospective ‘Happiness’ went away to mourn!” laughed Miss Wendall.

“But there are so many wonderful *trained* dancers, Miss Wendall.” Florence protested, recalling the skill displayed by many of the girls. “What about Lucille Dova?”

“Lucille is fine,” agreed Miss Wendall, “but only in a certain type of dance—the Russian ballet, in which she has been trained all her life. She is not at all the one to do a solo of this kind, where so much depends upon dramatic expression and natural, untechnical grace.” She spoke in as matter-of-fact a tone as she would have used in discussing the weather, or anything equally obvious. There was no hint of an attempt to be flattering, or even complimentary. “Your friend, Miss Arclift, is to be a little nixie dryad.”

“I just knew she would be,” exulted Florence.

“Now that I have told you all the ‘bad’ news I can think of,” Miss Wendall finished, dimpling, “I must run to a conference. If you will stay after class next time, you may hear your music, and we’ll compose the dance together.”

Florence was so exuberant that she could

scarcely restrain herself from doing a dance of joyous abandon all the way home, and, when she finally bounced into her room, Betty immediately wanted to know if the prospect of going to Prytanean with Rob was "as thrilling as all that."

"I just heard some good news!" Florence cried.

"After all that we have had to-day? What now?"

"My turn, this time," declared Florence. "Betty, I'm not eliminated, after all."

"Didn't I *tell* you that there was some mistake?"

"I'm to do the solo!" sang Florence, executing an impromptu one around the room.

Betty was as pleased as she. "The only one in this year's Partheneia!" she thrilled. "This house will just burst with pride if anything else happens. Do stand still and tell me about it." She caught the careening figure and pulled her down into a chair.

Florence described her interview with Miss Wendall in such a manner that she sent Betty off into fits of laughter. "I can just imagine the facial expressions you registered this after-

noon! It's too good to keep. Come on, you must have your share of the congratulations that are being scattered about."

The spread and impromptu dance honored not one, but four, of Gamma Zeta's active chapter, for Florence had circulated the news of Betty's success, too.

"The end of a perfect day," her partner said gallantly, as he bade her good-night. "This has been a red-letter day for your House, hasn't it?"

"Just one wonderful thing after another," Florence smiled, "a day of triumphs."

CHAPTER XV

A PROBLEM

EVERY possible free hour found Florence in the gymnasium, enthusiastically practising all the steps which would fit the rhythm of the Happiness music and, at the same time, express its spirit.

"It is going along very nicely," commented Miss Wendall one day, when Florence dropped into a chair to rest. "Is it because you are so perpetually happy that you put so much expression into it?"

"Perhaps," laughed the soloist, "but all those skippy notes just make you want to dance as though you were enjoying life. Still," she pondered seriously, "I don't think I could do so well if I were unhappy or worried."

"Then see that you don't become unhappy or worried before Partheneia," cautioned Miss Wendall brightly, "though I hope you won't start after that, either."

"I won't ever," Florence promised recklessly, skipping out to her dressing-room for a hurried shower before dashing for the Lake Merritt car.

“Here comes another middy,” rejoiced one of the carful of lake-bound girls. “We ought to have nearly enough for a practice regatta to-night.”

“No,” protested another, “that takes all the excitement out of the real one.”

“How does it, when we don’t yet know who is going to paddle in the real event?”

That was the question that was agitating more than one of those middy-clad girls. Who were to be the fortunate ones to paddle in the colorful spring water-pageant and races? Freshmen were eagerly looking forward to the opportunity of winning their class numerals; older girls who had already won several sets of numerals secretly longed for the little golden paddle which would designate them one of the “All Star” team, or for a number of points which might lead to the privilege of wearing a beautiful block C. For Florence, however, the chief reason for wanting to “make the team” was the privilege of enjoying the sport that she had loved for so long a time. She was human enough to like the honor of being among the chosen few, but that part of it would never supersede the joy of doing the thing itself.

She sang, as she plied her paddle through the waters of Lake Merritt that evening. "Hail to California, Alma Mater dear!" the buoyant young voice rang out while she drank in the beauty of sun-flushed sky and gold-tinted cloud-banks. The canoes which cut through the glowing water were all headed toward the landing. Reluctantly, she dropped her paddle and, with a longing glance out over the expanse of lake, allowed her craft to glide shoreward.

"Sadie's gone again," she sighed, "and still I don't know which of us is the better paddler. It is so lovely, I hate to go in," she called to the coach.

"We all do," smiled Miss Bentley. "You have worked hard enough for one evening," she added. "Your stroke is becoming quite sturdy, Miss Essex."

"I love it. Isn't it glorious on the lake at this time of day?" breathed the enthusiast, stepping out onto the dock.

"You are still fresh and exuberant after all your exertions. Don't you ever get tired?"

"Not of canoeing," Florence laughed, as she ran toward the cloak-room of the boat-house. "I do feel unusually buoyant to-night," she confided

to the mirror. "Wonder if it is a sign that something especially nice is going to happen?"

She was hurriedly hunting her books, among the scattered piles, when her attention was arrested by the sound of her name; some one on the other side of the partition was talking about her. Without a moment's hesitation she stepped into full view of the conversants, one of whom she recognized as the manager. "It is a draw between Florence Essex and Sadie Erna for the Freshman single," she had said, and she only smiled when she realized that Florence had heard.

Florence returned her nod of recognition and hurried out, her mind awlirl. If only she hadn't heard! She wanted the honor, she wanted to win it fairly,—and yet—Sadie had so little. It seemed unfair even to try to compete against her for the coveted privilege of paddling Freshman single. What a wonderful thing it would be for Sadie! Florence knew that their chances were about equal, but the prospect of her own success suddenly lost its brightness.

"Of course, I may not win; but suppose I should! Sadie would dislike me more than

ever—and, well, she *has* worked hard. I think I should really prefer to let her have it. After all, I have Partheneia and other activities. Sadie hasn't—anything. I do want to paddle in the regatta, but—O—if it were any one but Sadie!—I wonder if it would be fair to cut practice, just once? Then it would surely go to her. I would be automatically dropped from the eligible list.” Her chaotic thoughts ended in a sigh of utter perplexity.

As was usually the case on canoeing nights, the girls were at dinner when she arrived home. Their merry voices floated out to her from the dining-room as she passed. She ran quietly upstairs and flung herself on the bed, too weary and bewildered to think of eating, and finally dozed off into a restless sleep.

It was dark and quiet when she awoke. She was still alone, but some one had been in and thrown a quilt over her. She sat up, heavy-eyed, and recalled the problem which she faced. There was a note pinned to her cushion. She rose slowly and walked over to pick it up. How still the house was! Quiet hours already? Yes, it was eight-thirty, but, even so, there should be some indication of life,—not even the scraping of

a chair, now, nor the rustle of paper! What was the matter?

She hastily opened the note. It was from Betty, and read:

“FLORENCE:

“We girls have gone to hear the last of the ‘Round the World’ lectures. It is by Nell Sutherland, Gamma Zeta alumna. I wanted to wake you and take you along, but Mother Preston wouldn’t let me. You did look so tired! If you wake in time, come along. It is in Wheeler Auditorium; look for us on the right side, and we’ll squeeze you in somehow.

“BETTY.”

Florence glanced out into the hall. Sidney Cartwright’s door stood open and the light cast a cheerful panel across the floor outside her room. The Freshman tiptoed over and looked in at Sidney, bent over a ponderous volume on Anatomy.

“Awfully busy, Sidney?”

“Yes, awfully,” Sidney answered without hesitation, “but if there’s something I can do for you in five minutes ——”

“It won’t take *one*,” Florence assured her. “I want to ask your august opinion on a question of athletics.”

Sidney looked interested. “Yes?”

“What would you think of a girl who deliberately cut practice in order to give another girl a better chance of making the team?”

Sidney sank back, surprised, but immediately grew pensive. “We-ll-l,” she drawled finally, “in one way, it might be considered a very noble, unselfish thing to do.”

Florence looked relieved, but her smile disappeared as Sidney went on, “In another way, though, I should consider it a very thoughtless thing to do,—particularly if the self-sacrificing girl were a sorority member. It would be a question of deciding whether her loyalty to her sorority were greater or less than her loyalty to an individual, for whom she wanted to do a good turn. Of course, circumstances *might* justify it, but I hardly think it would be strictly ethical. The team privileges and honors should go to the better man. No really good sport wants a place that is deliberately given up to her by default.”

Florence thanked Sidney, but went back to her room more perplexed than before. She had rather enjoyed the thought of sacrificing her own chances for Sadie, and now Sidney had reminded her that she had Gamma Zeta to think of, too, and that it was not “strictly ethical” to default

on purpose. "And yet, I just know I sha'n't enjoy the regatta a bit, if I take the place that Sadie has set her heart on. I know how I felt when I thought I had been eliminated from Partheneia, and it would be worse with Sadie, who has concentrated all her spare time and effort on this one thing. O dear!"

Florence undressed wearily and went to bed. Before the girls had returned from the campus, she fell asleep with her problem still unsolved.

The alarm clock of some early-rising Senior woke her at six o'clock next morning. Her head ached dully and refused to let her sleep again. She rose quietly and stole across the sleeping-porch to her room, resolved to wear away her headache with a morning ride on Snow Queen.

It was a cool grey morning, with a tang of salt in the breeze that blew in over the Golden Gate. Both horse and rider felt the exhilaration and enjoyed a long canter about the hills and woods, now resplendent in the fresh green of late winter.

The eight o'clock chimes were ringing when they neared the campus again. The road ahead was clear, and Florence coaxed her mount into a last gallop. She was dashing blithely past

Senior Women's Hall—usually deserted at this time of day—when a dark figure appeared out of the bushes and scurried across the road directly in front of them. Overcome with a sudden, sickening horror, Florence sharply draw rein. Snow Queen shied and stopped with an abruptness that sent her rider hurtling over her head into the road.

Florence felt sudden stabs of pain all over her body, while her eyes looked out upon a dizzy world in which Snow Queen and Sadie Erna's horrified face whirled about until they faded into darkness.

When she opened her eyes again, she was lying on a little white cot in the Infirmary, with bandages and compresses hindering her whenever she tried to move. A nurse bent over her and commanded her to lie still. Florence willingly obeyed, for every movement sent a thrill of pain shooting to her head.

"Sadie," she murmured anxiously. "Was Sadie hurt?"

"No, Sadie is all right. Your horse stopped in time, though rather too soon, for you," she added with an attempt at humor.

"How long have I been here?"

“About an hour. You will be all right if you’ll just rest quietly—no bones hurt, and your cuts and bruises will be healed in no time. Try to sleep now, and you may have a visitor or two this afternoon.”

But Florence had one more question to ask, “Snow Queen?”

The nurse looked puzzled.

“My horse?”

“Oh, your horse is all right. They quieted her and took her to the stable. Close your eyes now. I’m not going to answer a single question more.”

It was the first time in her life that Florence had been in a hospital, but she found that “being an invalid” has its compensations, and that painful treatments and disagreeable medicines can be forgotten, when one has tender and solicitous friends and “sisters” to cheer one, and to bank one’s room with flowers and magazines. Even Sadie, though she did not appear in person, sent up a bouquet and a tearful note which shocked Florence. Sadie thought that Florence believed she had frightened Snow Queen deliberately!

“But I didn’t! Please believe me, if you can.

I know I've been hateful, but I wouldn't do a thing like that! I wouldn't have you hurt for *anything*, let alone for the sake of canoeing honors. I have been mean to you, but you mustn't think *that* of me!"

No such idea had even occurred to Florence. She had severely blamed herself for indulging in a gallop on a road so near the campus, where some one might have been crossing at any moment, just as Sadie had, in her hurry toward her Forestry class. Much concerned, Florence immediately answered Sadie's note, doing her best to set the girl's fears at rest, and begging her to come to see her, so that she might reassure her in person.

But Sadie never came to the Infirmary. Florence understood. She would be too painfully self-conscious in the presence of others, and there was always some one there. Each Visitors' Hour was crowded to the full. Her sorority sisters came, and other friends—Robert Arclift and Mark; once Viola had come and brought her brother to cheer the patient with the stories that she always loved to hear. Suppose Sadie had come in, then! Sadie, and the poised, elegant Carsons! Florence was glad it did not happen.

But she was determined to see Sadie, and one of her first acts, on the day she was released from the Infirmary, was to look up Sadie's address in the directory of students.

The problem which had troubled her was automatically settled. There was no question of ethics, or of disloyalty to Gamma Zeta now. The canoeing single would go to Sadie, as Florence really wished it to. After all, she had brought her share of honor to Gamma Zeta in other ways. Had she not achieved the only solo in the Parthenonia? Once this visit to Sadie was accomplished, the last worry would be removed, and there would be nothing to prevent her doing well the dance of joyous abandon called "Happiness."

CHAPTER XVI

GINGHAM AND VELVET

“WHAT would *you* do about it, Kitten?” Florence stroked the sleepy Goldie until he emitted a long, contented purr which, though pleasant, did not in the last help to solve her problem. “Oh, to be a fluffy kitten and never have to worry about clothes!” Florence sighed.

She got up, slipped the emerald-green dress off its hanger and held it against her, but shook her head.

“It has lost its freshness, and that’s all there is to it,” she concluded dismally. “Why, oh *why*, didn’t I think about that when I bought this recklessly extravagant coat?”

She had squandered most of two months’ allowance on a white wrap trimmed with broad bands of snowy fox fur. Even now, as she tried it on and saw how well it became her, she hardly regretted the purchase. The fact that it was a beautiful wrap, exactly suited to her, somehow made her forget the inconsistency of not having a frock to wear with it.

She was looking forward to a *thé-dansant* at the Kappa House. No less a person than the universally admired Ted Carson was to take her. And she had "not a thing to wear," if we may be permitted a favorite hyperbole among college misses. The lovely green dress was already showing signs of wear, and the only alternative—the coral velvet—why, Ted had seen that twice before! Besides, everybody was planning to have a *new* gown for this particular dance.

"What shall I do?" she worried over and over, and finally sat down to indulge in a fit of discontented musing on the horrid inconvenience of being "poor," and in envy of Viola—who ordered evening gowns by the dozen, and never wore the same one twice.

"How nice it must be to have wealth, 'spite of what any one says to the contrary!" she reflected. "Servants to do the disagreeable, prosy things, beauty everywhere,—no worry and speculation as to the question of being able to afford anything one wanted."

But such reflections did not solve the problem of a frock for the Kappa dance. Florence felt that she was a much-abused citizen of the world when she replaced her only two evening gowns

and, slipping on a street coat, hustled out to make her call on Sadie Erna.

She found the house, only after some difficulty. It was on a narrow, unpretentious street, and it was set almost directly back of another house facing the same way. Brown-shingled and oddly shaped, it reminded Florence of Hawthorne's "House of the Seven Gables." It was like Sadie, to choose a queer, retired place like this, when she might just as easily have earned her board and room in the beautiful home of one of the professors, blocks nearer the campus.

A tall, black-gowned woman smilingly admitted her, but very poorly concealed her surprise when the visitor asked for Miss Erna.

"Miss Erna? You mean *Sadie*? Oh, eh—yes. She has her own quarters, up two flights, just at the head of the stairs."

Florence felt her way slowly up the dark and narrow stairway. At the top of the second flight she found herself precipitantly entering an attic bedroom. Not a sign of a door was there to insure its occupant any privacy, should any one take a notion to walk up that second flight of stairs. But it was probable that Sadie's privacy was seldom disturbed. Florence, em-

barrassed and bewildered, stood near the top of the stairway, looking toward a tiny figure that lay huddled on the bed. How should she announce her presence? She was vaguely considering a quick retreat when the figure on the bed stirred. Sadie sat up, yawning and rubbing her eyes, and began to turn the pages of the book beside her. She espied Florence suddenly, and her surprise overcame all thoughts of shyness for a moment.

"Florence Essex!" she breathed, her eyes slowly widening.

"I'm sorry if I disturbed you, Sadie. May I come in?"

"Oh yes! Please pardon me. I—I was so surprised ——" Sadie jumped up, smoothed the wrinkles out of her dress, and came forward shyly.

"This isn't a very wonderful place to receive you, but—Miss Edge doesn't allow me to use the parlor. You see—I don't very often have visitors, anyway."

"Why this is really cosy," Florence declared, surveying the sloping ceiling with the narrow cot under the lower end, and the little square window near which a table and a dresser crowded

close together, as if competing for the light. A curtained "wardrobe" occupied the last bit of available space, and Florence wondered how she would dispose of herself as she hesitantly accepted Sadie's invitation to "come in."

"I'm afraid you'll have to sit on the bed," Sadie apologized. "My only chair is badly disabled." She pointed to a backless stool whose wobbly legs seemed unable to support even its own frail weight; and which displayed alarming symptoms of falling to pieces.

Florence sat down, regarding Sadie the while. She was catching a glimpse of the real Sadie now,—that touch of humor about the chair. Sadie *could* laugh!

"This is cosy," Florence repeated. "Sometimes I wish *I* had a little nest like this, all to myself."

Sadie's face sobered. "You don't have to be so polite," she remarked, a little ungraciously. "It's only a wretched, drafty attic, and nothing will ever make it any different."

Florence colored. "But I *meant* what I said, Sadie. Honestly! If you would hang a curtain, or have a door put there at the head of the stairs, it would keep out the drafts, and it would make

the room more private and homelike, too. Let's try it and see."

The little room was unpleasantly chill, and the wind blew up the narrow stairway in a continuous breeze. Florence removed one of the full, heavy curtains from the wardrobe and secured its pointed hooks in the chancel over the doorway which had never known a door. The effect was instantly perceptible. Not only was the annoying draft cut off, but the dark, unfriendly opening was covered, giving the little domain an atmosphere of "shut-in-ness" which was almost homelike.

"That does make a difference," conceded Sadie, "but it'll make the stairway darker than a dungeon."

"You can put up a rod, and push the portière open, as you leave the room," Florence suggested. "Why, Sadie, this could be the duckiest place! Do you mind my poking around like this? I love to ferret out possibilities—that window, for instance. Wouldn't it be pretty with sheer net curtains and narrow rosy drapes? And you could have a braided rug here by the bed. And that chair—a little glue and paint would put it into shape in no time."

Sadie was smiling queerly. "But those things cost money," she said, as though that dismissed the subject. "I—I got your note," she broke off abruptly. "Are—are you sure you don't think that I—that I scared your horse on purpose?"

"Of course! No such idea ever entered my head!" Florence declared emphatically. "I can't imagine what made you think of such a thing, Sadie!"

The other girl seemed relieved at her very evident sincerity. "Well, I did want the canoeing single, wanted it awfully, but not that much!"

"You silly!" Florence laughed. "I know you didn't want it, or anything else, bad enough to gain it in that way."

"But I *have* been mean," Sadie went on ruefully. "I've deliberately kept you waiting at the store when I knew every second was precious, I've played rough in hockey, just to rattle you—I—I guess I don't need to tell you all I've done. You've probably noticed."

Florence was too conscientious to say that she hadn't noticed. She had spent many anxious moments wondering why Sadie did those very things. But she smiled now.

“*Why* don’t you like me, Sadie?” she asked, with irresistible frankness.

A faint pink stole up into Sadie’s cheeks. “I—do like you,” she stammered, “but I thought I didn’t. Once I thought I hated you, not for anything you did—just because—all the years I’ve known you, you’ve always had everything, and I’ve had nothing. Your beautiful mother, and your wonderful father and brother, and your lovely home,—and Snow Queen, and pretty clothes, and now—all the best things in college. I hated you because you took everything—your sorority, and your friends, *everything*, so much for granted. I suppose it was only jealousy and envy. There was no reason I should dislike you, just because you were more fortunate than I. But I did, and I’ve been miserable for hours, thinking of all you have, and of all I’ve never had. I took my resentment out on you. It’s only since your accident that I stopped to think how unreasonable and foolish I’ve been.”

Florence had listened, wide-eyed, to this recital. Various emotions crossed her mind,—relief, surprise, amusement, pity, and an uneasy sense of shame when she recalled the afternoon’s

rebellious worry over the problem of an evening gown for the Kappa Dance. Here was Sadie, living in an attic a mile away from the campus, who had scarcely any clothes presentable enough even for everyday! Florence did some rapid thinking as Sadie talked on, bitterly describing her barren and lonely life, her struggles to earn bread and butter and a drafty, attic room, as well as the education that was to pave the way to better things.

Florence's whirling thoughts became less chaotic and focussed upon Sadie Erna's thin little face, in which the great grey eyes stood out wide and sparkling, rendering her suddenly attractive.

"It's always been that way, though," Sadie ended with a quivering sigh. "I never have had anything. I suppose I never shall! Even when an opportunity comes along, I never seem to be able to grasp it. That letter on the table—it's from the dean. She wants me to apply for a position as companion and guide to a blind student who happens to be taking the same subjects as I. It would be wonderful—fifty dollars a month just for helping her about the campus and reading her lessons for her. I could give up

the long hours in the store, I wouldn't need to break my back ironing all day Saturday. Fifty dollars a month, why, I'd be rich! But there isn't the slightest chance that I'd *get* the position. So I sha'n't bother applying."

"Why not?" Florence demanded.

Sadie looked at her, and then at her own rumpled and faded appearance. She brushed aside a stringy lock of hair with a savage gesture.

"Her mother would be ashamed to have her seen about the campus with me," she said, in tones of helpless resignation.

Florence did not attempt a polite denial of Sadie's statement, but stood regarding her contemplatively for a moment or two.

"Sadie," she began at last, "you ought to get over the idea that everybody in the world looks down on you. You're just as good as anybody else on the campus—a lot better than most of us! And furthermore," she went on earnestly, "you could be attractive and have hosts of friends, if you'd only make up your mind about it. Oh, I know you haven't much time, and you work hard, and all that, but you ought to have a little fun, too. Now that you've had this position offered you, things will be easier, anyway."

“I haven’t been offered the position. I was only advised to apply for it. Applying for a position and *getting* it are two different things. I told you I wasn’t going to apply. What’s the use? ”

Florence’s soft mouth straightened into a thin red line, and her little round chin went up determinedly. “You are going to apply, Sadie! And, what’s more, you’re going to get the position! I wish you’d let me show you how attractive you could be if you’d only give yourself a chance.”

“What do you mean? ”

“Your hair, for instance. It’s quite thick, except at the ends. Why don’t you bob it? It would be very becoming.—Let me do it now!” she ended enthusiastically. “I know how. I cut Betty’s every time she needs it, so that she can save the pennies. Do let me, Sadie. I’d love to see you with a straight bob, and bangs across the forehead. You’d look like Joan of Arc.”

Florence caught up a pair of shears, and almost before Sadie could say a word of either protest or acquiescence, she had pulled out the hairpins, and let the straight, uneven ends fall

down over Sadie's shoulders. The shears clipped busily for a short minute. The uneven, stringy ends were off, and Sadie's anxiety immediately disappeared in a sigh of relief. The improvement was already perceptible. Working with sedulous care, Florence clipped and trimmed, combed and parted, standing off now and then to survey results.

"There!" she exclaimed proudly as she finished.

Sadie, looking into the mirror, marveled at the change. The uneven strands which had fallen untidily about her face and neck were gone. Glossy bangs covered the too high forehead, and a thick fringe of hair fell over her ears and curved forward, hiding the hollows of her thin cheeks. Her grey eyes looked out from a face attractively framed by the hair which had heretofore been one of her chief detriments.

"And it will be neat, even when you wake up in the morning," exulted Florence. "Just a quick brushing will put it in order for the day. If you like, I'll come over and shampoo it for you to-morrow. That will take the 'just cut' look off the ends, and make it easier to train. Now then,—I caught a glimpse of a Russian

peasant dress in your wardrobe. Let's see how it looks. I've never seen you wear it."

"That!" exclaimed Sadie, when Florence indicated a gracefully bloused garment with full, gathered sleeves, and shirred, round neck. "I just wear that around the house to save my other things. It's an old, old thing that Lydia Berkhoff made me, years ago, for helping her with her English."

"It's beautiful!" exclaimed Florence, examining the graceful folds and odd embroidery of the garment. "It's a gem. Put it on, Sadie. Russian lines are very much the thing, right now."

Sadie slipped the dress over her head. Its soft blue, and colored embroidery brightened the pale face and accentuated the great, grey eyes.

"I declare, you're positively *distingué*," Florence enthused, prancing about and gushing like a typical modiste.

"I do look different," Sadie remarked wonderingly. "I never particularly noticed how pretty this dress is. I suppose it's the hair. Bobbed hair seems to fit it, somehow."

"It does, and now a bit of a shine on milady's slippers, and I'd like to know who wouldn't be *proud* to walk across the campus with her!"



THE IMPROVEMENT WAS ALREADY PERCEPTIBLE.—Page 199.

The transformation was finally completed, and Sadie, looking into the mirror at herself, could feel only gratefulness toward the girl who had shown her her possibilities.

"I guess I've never troubled myself much about looks. Thought it wasn't any use. Who'd ever think it could make such a big difference?"

Before Florence had left, the whole scant wardrobe was gone over. Faded ginghamms were set aside to be dyed and shortened; out-of-date blouses and jabots were cut up and made into collar and cuffs for the two dark dresses which needed some such brightening touch.

"And with fifty dollars a month, I can buy shoes and other things I need," Sadie sparkled. "I'll not be poor any more."

Florence smiled to see how the resigned hopelessness had been replaced with naïve self-confidence. Sadie Erna was already a changed being. The person who said "Clothes make the man," perhaps never realized that he was voicing a bit of sound psychology.

Early Saturday evening, the telephone at the Gamma Zeta House tinkled. Florence, mindful of her Freshman duty, stopped half-way upstairs and turned back to answer it. Over the wire

came Sadie Erna's voice, vibrant with happy excitement.

"Is Florence Essex there?"

"This is she. Hello, Sadie!"

"Oh, Florence, I could hardly wait to tell you. I applied for that position, and I got it! And Martha, the blind girl, is so sweet and lovely. We're fast friends already. College is going to be very different for me, from now on. And it was you who brought me to my senses. It's all due to you, this good luck!"

Florence's gladness was genuine as she congratulated Sadie. Still smiling, she went upstairs to put on the coral gown which was not new, and which Ted Carson had seen twice.

CHAPTER XVII

THE END OF FRESHMAN YEAR

FACULTY GLADE was lovelier than ever that spring, and it took but little imagination for the Partheneia audience to transport itself to the realm of dreams, as colorfully portrayed by the dancers, one afternoon in late April. Graceful, swaying figures in misty grey stole up and wavered until driven away by the bright spirits of rosy "Dawn." Golden-robed "Sunbeams" burst through and scattered the last remnant of grey, and triumphed at last over the rose and violet Dawn spirits. Along the road which symbolized Life's Highway came a maiden, wondering at the things which her journey revealed. Dark visioned Fear glided stealthily before her, until the shining spirit of Courage took her by the hand. She met Hate in company with Grief, but both of them were dispelled by Love, triumphantly glowing in raiments of red and orange. She stretched forth her hand to touch one of the fiery figures when Fame, blue and silvery, interposed and tempted her.

“But Fame comes alone,” the maiden sighed. “I seek Happiness and her companions.”

The spirits of Love encircled her again, joining hands with Joy of Service. They danced together and called. The turbulent music paused for an instant, and then broke forth in a ripple of laughter. Vivid against the green foliage came a lightly leaping, skipping figure, all in a cloud of rosy mist. Like the very essence of happiness she seemed, whirling and swaying as if intoxicated with the very joy of being.

The audience leaned forward. Tired faces lifted, drooping mouths curved into smiles, dull eyes sparkled with renewed enthusiasm. The dance over, the action of the play was going on, but a vision of the bright spirit of Happiness would haunt the Glade forevermore, for those who had looked upon it.

“Miss Essex, Florence, you were *wonderful*,” Miss Wendall beamed. “It seemed that you were just overflowing with joy, and we who watched could not help being drenched with the overflow. You made *us* feel as you did. How did you make it so vivid? It was better than any rehearsal, better than anything I could have imagined.”

“I am glad, Miss Wendall. I *was* happy, I *am* happy. I couldn’t help spilling some of it about.”

The teacher laughed. “You may be sure that none of it was wasted.”

A green and brown woodland dryad appeared from behind the screen of foliage, but it was an unmistakably human voice which said, “They are clapping their hands black and blue for you, Flo!”

“But I’ve had my share,” Florence protested, as she was pushed out to receive her applause. “I don’t deserve it,” she affirmed, when she came back, after an ovation that would have gladdened the heart of a veteran artist. “They thought that I was acting, and I wasn’t,—not a bit.”

It was useless for Florence to try to escape the crowd of sincere congratulators that besieged her for days afterwards. They stopped her on the campus, in the library, in classrooms. Betty liked to tell people that it took two hours to escort her room-mate half a block, on the day of her Partheneia success.

Florence was too bewildered to realize her triumph. She did indulge in a sigh of happy satisfaction, but it was not entirely as a result

of campus homage and favorable comment from dramatic critics.

“Now that you’re becoming somewhat of a campus celebrity,” yawned Betty, one evening as they scuffled out to the sleeping-porch, “I’ll have to develop *my* talents. Know any convenient field where I can practise running a tractor?”

With the approach of May, University Freshmen began to find twenty-four hours a rather short time in which to accomplish a day’s work and play. There was a hurried effort to do the last things well and to finish the year with a worth-while record. For the girls, Partheneia was only one event. There was the athletic Field Day, and the Regatta.

As final examinations approached, there was a flutter of anticipation among the Seniors. Their academic work over early, they began to be fêted here and there, individually and collectively.

Florence finished her examinations early, and, while the rest of the girls were busy with studying or with preparations for Commencement sea-

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son, she and Betty would steal off for the walks which had been somewhat neglected in the rush of study and campus affairs.

When Betty announced that she would take the one-forty-five train for the mountains on Thursday, House-Manager Sidney Cartwright promptly made arrangements for the last "all together" dinner, an annual custom which always preceded the first break in the ranks. It was the half sad, half jolly affair that such events are likely to be, for each girl, under all her gaiety, realized that this particular group might never be thus assembled again.

The occasion was characterized by an informal discussion of plans, and an interchange of addresses and promises. It was learned that Ruth would be the only Senior back for a graduate year. She hoped to do some practice teaching in preparation for the following year, when she would be "on her own," as she expressed it. Shirley, as Jerry had prophesied, was to take upon herself the rôle of director of a Bay City orchestra composed entirely of women. All the undergraduates looked forward to one or more years of work and play before they would bid their Alma Mater farewell. Even Marceil was

still determined to receive her degree from the University of California.

Immediately after this last dinner, Betty and Florence strolled up in the hills to have a quiet half-hour together before the whirl of confusion and good-bys which would begin on the next day.

“Why is it that no one takes college students seriously?” Florence wondered, as they stood looking down on the twinkling lights of the campus. “People seem to laugh at our little world, as though we were not worth any more serious thought than a child playing with his toys.”

“Oh, it’s not quite that bad,” Betty protested, “but, just the same, all this Commencement talk about ‘going out into the world’ bothers me. Any one would think that we were just as sheltered here as babes in a cradle, and quite as care-free and irresponsible.”

“I suppose that we—you and I and the other students of our status *are* more sheltered than a great many. Think of the blind students who grope their way to a Bachelor’s degree, to say nothing of some of those very poor ones who earn their way by doing the humblest kind of manual labor.”

"Yes,—there are greater tragedies than a condition in one's major subject," Betty added, with unusual earnestness.

"But there's plenty of joy, too. Aren't you glad that we are only Freshmen, and that we have three more years of college before us?"

"'Deed yes! By the way, Flo, have you decided about your major, yet?"

"Not the ghost of an idea," Florence told her ruefully.

"Well," mused Betty, "if I were you I should take Professor Lane's advice and go in for Journalism."

But Florence did not "go in for Journalism." What she did choose, eventually, was a surprise to herself as well as to everybody else, but, once she had decided, she wondered why she had not thought of it before.

It came about in a most unexpected way. The Essexes, with Betty and Rob as guests, had spent a month motoring about California. They had visited old missions in the south, roamed through the sea-girt forests of Monterey, climbed high into the Sierras and heard first-hand stories of "the days of '49," had stood in awe among gi-

gantic trees that were in their youth before Christ was born.

Florence was always strangely silent whenever they traversed some place made memorable by the events of long ago. Robert noticed this, and loved to show her how to reconstruct the story of some deserted Indian camp or ruined mission. He hunted about and dug, wherever he could, and brought her bits of flint and arrow-heads, occasionally a piece of pottery, and, once, an ancient "devil stick" wound with woman's hair. Florence's imagination was always fired by these things, and she and Robert would talk for hours about that past whose story was so legible to those who had learned to read it.

"History!" she exclaimed suddenly, as Robert finished telling her of an ancient Mexican civilization that antedated the Egyptians. "I've been trying to decide what it is that fascinates me so everywhere, even in this hot, dusty desert. It's history! It seems so near, somehow, when you see these things and think about them."

Betty beamed triumphantly. "That settles your major question for you, doesn't it, Flo?"

Florence laughed, but finally nodded energetically. "It does!" she exclaimed, much surprised

and pleased. "How funny that I never thought of it before! But it never attracted me as it does this summer. I never thought of it as anything but a bothersome confusion of names, dates, and maps. Now these things," she took up the bit of pottery and the ancient "devil stick,"—"these things make it *real*."

Robert looked gratified. "I was going to suggest History, several times," he said, "but I knew that you'd find it out for yourself."

"Is it what you're majoring in, Rob?"

"Not exactly. I'm studying Archeology;—but History and Archeology are first cousins."

Florence's eyes grew round with awe. "You mean—you're going to hunt for buried cities and,—and things like that?"

Robert laughed. "There may not always be a whole city to dig for,—but I'll do my best. I'm interested in Arizona and New Mexico, right now," he added sobering. "That's where I'll aim for, the minute I graduate."

"That's where they're finding the ante-Egyptian ruins?" Florence inquired dreamily, "and yet, there are people who say America has no history!"

CHAPTER XVIII

JOLLY SOPHOMORES

It was with a great deal of self-conscious pride that Betty and Florence went about on the campus that first day of their Sophomore year, looking upon the newly arrived Freshmen with the amused tolerance of the privileged class to which they now belonged. What a joy it was to be among the "upperclass" contingent of the House, to be relieved of the prosaic duties which, though not arduous in themselves, had branded them as neophytes for so long. It was a little time before they ceased to jump at the sound of the telephone, only to subside blushing under the good-natured taunts of Juniors and Seniors who pretended to have forgotten their own early Sophomore days.

During "rushing" season, Florence was very much occupied with thoughts of Sadie. In the few months since that memorable visit, Sadie had "blossomed out" almost unbelievably. The normal, fun-loving girl that she was meant to be, no longer remained hidden beneath an impenetrable surface of self-conscious reserve. The dis-

covery that she *could* look attractive was the beginning. Then came the opportunity for congenial work and the end of financial troubles. Recognition among her classmates followed naturally after her success in the spring regatta. The poised and smiling Sadie Erna of the Sophomore class was scarcely recognizable as the timid, whining girl that Sadie had been for so many years.

Florence went to the gabled house early in the first week of college, but found that the little room was occupied by a temperamental art student who, though not lacking funds for a better abode, preferred the tiny attic where she could boil her coffee over the gas and lunch on crackers and sardines, in what was her idea of true Bohemian style.

“And you have no idea where I can find Miss Erna?” Florence inquired of Miss Edge, as she turned away from the house.

“No. I have not seen her since she left last May. She has become quite independent since she was hired by Mrs. Prime. Went to the mountains and worked for her all summer, I understand;—won’t even consider a half-day’s ironing any more.”

The little lady seemed quite abused since she was deprived of the privilege of treating Sadie like a slave, and vented her ire with many similar comments and petulant sniffs before Florence managed to get away, glad that Sadie *could* be independent, *could* refuse to consider the hard work which had been her portion for too many years already.

“What am I to do?” she thought, strolling back toward the campus. “It seems I always lose track of some one that I want for Gamma Zeta. Last year it was Betty. Now, it’s Sadie.” After this came the persistent question — how would Sadie impress the other girls? Would they see her possibilities as readily as she did?

Florence understood Sadie’s sensitive nature too well to subject her to the humiliation of possible failure. Better not to “rush” her at all, than to risk that. Strangely enough, the only person whose opinion Florence feared, was Betty’s. Betty had never liked Sadie. Even after the events of the previous spring, Betty could not be persuaded to think much of the girl who had so often vented an unjust prejudice toward Florence.

“It’s all right to forgive and forget,” Betty de-

clared, the night after Florence's visit to the gabled house, "but I can't see why you want to make her one of us. Isn't that going a little too far?"

"Oh, don't talk of forgiving," retorted Florence. "Any one would think that she had tried to murder me. You don't understand, Beth. Just imagine yourself in the same circumstances—no money nor clothes but what you worked for, no friends, always afraid to be seen,—no fun,—nothing that other girls have,—wouldn't you have become a little bitter?"

"It was her own fault," Betty answered obstinately. "There are plenty of poor, hard-working students who dress neatly, and get some fun out of college, too. And they don't go home and whine because all the fraternities on the campus are not running after them."

"Why, Betty! That sounds horribly snobbish."

"I'm *not* snobbish. Isn't Elsie Blythe working her way? And I like her and *want* her. It isn't because Sadie is poor. It's, well—she acted so queerly toward you; and there really wasn't any excuse for it. I can't imagine why you want her, Flo."

“Well, of course, if you really dislike her, I won’t bother to bring her up at all,” Florence spoke in an injured tone. “But I can’t see *why* you don’t like her. She never did anything to you. In fact, she likes you. She said once that she envied me my wonderful friends, and she mentioned you especially.”

Betty was not appeased. “And you’re doing just what she hoped you would—telling me about it. Well, she won’t gain my favor that way.”

“Betty! How unfair! I never knew you to talk so about any one. It isn’t a bit like you.”

They were nearer to quarreling than they had been in all the years of their friendship. Betty did not want to quarrel.

“Let’s change the subject,” she suggested abruptly. “Flo, you have a right to rush whom you please, and if your noble little self feels sorry for Sadie to the extent that you feel it’s your duty—why, what business of mine is it? Did you decide what History courses you are going to take? I think the Medieval would be interesting.”

Florence ignored the digression. “But it *is* your business,” she insisted. “And Betty, it isn’t just because I’m sorry for Sadie that I want her.

I think that being one of us would help her and give her some of the things that she's missed so far ; but besides that, I want her for herself. You haven't an idea what a fine girl she really is. I think she'd be a credit to us. Sadie Erna is going to make a name for herself, one of these days."

Betty sighed. She was as skeptical as ever about Sadie's good points, but she did not want to argue further. "Maybe I don't know her well enough," she conceded finally. "Bring her up to tea, or to the dance, Saturday. I—I might like her better on closer acquaintance. You never can tell."

Florence smiled and hugged her impulsively. "I know you will, when you understand her better. 'Sides, Betty, she's different from what she used to be,—better dressed, more poised,—everything. And she doesn't think about herself and her troubles half so much. You know, just being happy and unworried makes a lot of difference in a person's character."

"I—suppose it does," Betty drawled pensively.

The very next day they encountered Sadie as they were crossing the campus on their way to the tennis courts. Betty did not immediately

recognize the girl whose pale, intellectual face was so effectively framed by a Joan-of-Arc haircut, and whose neat little rose-colored frock made her look younger and really girlish. There was no hesitation or furtive desire to escape evident in Sadie's greeting of Florence. She even stopped to talk.

Betty observed her keenly as they were being introduced. She was surprised to find Sadie so natural and unassuming. She certainly showed no conscious desire to impress them favorably; and seemed quite unaware of the fact that Florence's eagerness to have her visit them at the Chapter House might have any personal significance.

"That's very nice of you," she was saying. "Of course I should love to come, but—would some other week do? You see, I can't very well leave Martha this week; we're both so busy getting settled. I'm with her and her mother, you know. We have an apartment on College, not so very far from where you live. Martha's the most wonderful girl! You should see the things she writes! She's had a poem published, too—a beautiful one, about friendship. And the editor who accepted it doesn't know yet that she's blind

and will never see the congratulatory letter that he wrote.”

Sadie talked breathlessly. It was obvious that she loved Martha Prime, and that the blind girl, whose sweet face was so familiar to every one on the campus, was largely responsible for the change in Sadie.

“I’m truly glad everything turned out so well for you both,” Florence beamed, seeing, as she looked into Sadie’s happy face, that the question of Sadie and Gamma Zeta was already settled. Sadie would never consider sorority membership now; her thoughts, her time,—her very self was already wrapped up in Martha. What Martha could not have, Sadie would also forego.

“Any time will be all right, and if you think Martha would enjoy it, bring her, too. I know she must be very interesting, and the girls would love to meet her.”

Sadie smiled gratefully. “Thank you. I think she would like it, though I don’t often take her among people she does not know. But *you* won’t feel distressed and sorry for her, will you? You must come and see us, some time. Martha would love to know you, I’m sure.”

They exchanged addresses and telephone num-

bers, and said a hasty good-by as Sadie hurried away with an anxious glance toward the campanile clock.

Betty, who had been unusually silent, was still pensive as they walked on. "She is very different, isn't she?" she drawled thoughtfully.

"Sadie? Yes, but it's only because she never had a chance before, never even knew how to make the best of things. Martha and her mother have already done wonders for her."

Betty was frowning. "If she doesn't come over to the House this week, how do you expect to bring her up for voting?" she asked. "Names must be in before midnight, Saturday."

"There would be no use in asking Sadie to join us," said Florence. "She wouldn't accept."

"Wouldn't accept!"

"No. Please, Betty, don't use that tone of voice. I know that Sadie was resentful last year, but she didn't crave sorority membership in the way that you think she did. She was just hungry for friendship and fun, and all the other things that we've always taken for granted. Now she is beginning to have those things, and she has some one else depending on her for them, too.

You see how much she cares for Martha. She will never consider anything that doesn't include Martha, too."

"Oh, I see. I should think that would be rather hard on Sadie, in some ways; and yet she seems happier than ever."

"She is," nodded Florence, "and I'm so glad!"

The following Sunday afternoon, Betty and Florence strolled along College Avenue to the address given them by Sadie. It was a large stucco apartment house surrounded by an atmosphere of quiet dignity. They walked through a carpeted lobby to the elevator. Martha's apartment was on the top floor, a concession to Sadie, who liked the view out over the Golden Gate.

Sadie, all in white, received them with a shy graciousness that had its own peculiar charm, and they entered a sunny room where bright rugs and cushions, tasteful prints and pictures, lent to the cosiness of the place. On a little pedestal in the corner stood a marble miniature of a dancer poised on tiptoe, and, on one side of the entrance, there was a large bust of "A Roman Lady." Other statues and plaques were in evi-

dence, wherever an appropriate niche offered itself.

“Martha’s,” Sadie explained, following Florence’s glance. “She loves to run her fingers over them. Martha knows more about line and balance in sculpture than most people who see. I’m sorry Mrs. Prime isn’t at home,” she digressed. “She went to San Francisco, this afternoon; but I’ll get Martha. She’s up on the roof-garden.”

Sadie went out and, in a few moments, reappeared with Martha, a tiny, dark-haired girl whose sightless blue eyes gave a far-away, almost ethereal expression to her delicate face.

“I am so glad to know you,” she said, smiling sunnily as introductions were being made. “Sadie has told me a great deal about you both.”

She listened very intently when they first began to talk, but, after a time, relaxed in her chair and took part in the conversation quite naturally, turning toward whoever addressed her, just as though she were studying their faces and gestures. In a very few moments she had learned to recognize their voices. Before the visit was over, she could distinguish Florence’s quick step from Betty’s slower, longer stride; she could pass

her hands lightly over the features of each and recognize them by the sense of touch.

Sadie slipped out for a few moments and returned, laden with packages. Drawing up the table, she set out cold roast meat, rolls, strawberry preserve, and Japanese tea-cakes. She made tea in the little kitchen, and, when all was ready, called her guests to the impromptu feast with all the pride of the seasoned hostess.

While they ate, they talked gaily of everyday campus experiences, and related mirthful anecdotes of events that were not quite "everyday." This led gradually to more serious topics, and they began to discuss their hopes and ambitions for the future. Betty vigorously defended her choice of a career as scientific agriculturist, closing with the sweeping statement, "Women are a success at anything they put their minds to. *No* line of work ought to be closed to them."

"Not even prize-fighting?" questioned Martha, with a demure smile that set them all to laughing.

"Florence is a History shark," Betty elucidated, glad to divert attention from herself. "She used to think it an imposition to be required to memorize a couple of names and dates;

but now she learns them by the yard—and all because my fair cousin dug up an Indian devil-stick and presented it to her. She goes around to all the available museums and ferrets out a story for every object in it—well, almost every object,” she amended, noting the flash of accusing protest in Florence’s eyes.

“I love History, too,” breathed Martha, “though the stories of wars and massacres distress me. I like to think that some day, not too far away, the world will be all peace, and love, and friendship. I can’t understand why there should be so much sorrow and suffering in a world so full of beauty.”

She stopped, suddenly embarrassed, but the other girls understood. They knew why Martha was already beginning to be known as an idealistic poet, and they marveled that one enshrouded in total darkness still found the world “so full of beauty.”

CHAPTER XIX

DAYS THAT FLY

BOTH Betty and Florence became a permanent part of the little circle of friends which clustered about Martha and Sadie and made life happier for them by their matter-of-fact congeniality. There was nothing of pity or condescension in their attitude; they were simply good friends who enjoyed one another's company. Even Betty discarded her old prejudice and received Sadie with the same frank cordiality that she accorded her other friends.

Besides following a full program of study, Martha took part in a number of college activities. With Sadie as watchful guide, she enjoyed a daily frolic in the swimming pool; on weekends she went to Lake Merritt and paddled about, enjoying the rhythm and motion of canoeing. Even at the Stanford game, she was as excited as anybody else. She went also to the Sophomore Hop and danced, gaily unconscious of her handicap, though Sadie always hovered near.

The golden autumn days sped by, Florence

becoming more and more absorbed in her work, despite the demands of committees, social functions, and athletics. She fairly devoured the long letters from Ted, who was now in South America and had much to tell her of the land of the Incas.

“He doesn’t seem at all conscious of the wonder of it all,” breathed Florence. She and Robert Arclift were walking to their History class together. “I wonder if Ted Carson knows how fortunate he is? And Viola, too. She’s in Paris, studying Art. It—it is nice to be wealthy, isn’t it?”

“Oh-h-h, it has its advantages all right,” assented Robert. “But I’m happy as long as I can do the kind of work I like.”

“Of course, but think what an advantage money would be. You’re going to be an archeologist. Think what it would mean to be able to go to Italy or Egypt and study the old ruins at first hand. Wouldn’t you love it, Rob?”

“Oh, I’d like it, all right. But America has a history, too. Didn’t I tell you about those ruins in New Mexico? I guess there’s work enough for me right here in the U. S. A.—for a while, at least.”

“Yes, but just the same, it is nice not to have to think of the cost every time you want to do anything. I’ve had a terrible siege of the ‘wanderlust’ ever since I first met Ted Carson. I’d love to spend a little of every year seeing the wonders that are everyday events to him.”

Robert did not reply, but Florence thought nothing of his sudden silence, for they had taken their seats in the History room, and Professor Furlow was on the platform. She uncapped her fountain pen and wrote absorbedly as Professor Furlow lectured on the very things which Ted had mentioned so casually in his letter. Robert wrote spasmodically, chewing his pen for long intervals while his attention wavered ridiculously from the customs of the Incas to a tiny golden ringlet which almost brushed his hand as Florence bent over her work. The moment the clock struck, he slammed his note-book shut and tucked his pen away. The instructor had scarcely finished announcing the assignments for next time when Robert began to speak.

“Flo,” he said, “you don’t have any Saturday classes, do you? Let’s take a run over to Mount Tamalpais, or Muir Woods. Betty has never been there. We’ll get Charlie to come along, too.

His mother is down here now and will make a perfect 'chap,' she's so young and jolly. Let's? "

"I'd love it," Florence agreed enthusiastically. "It will do us all good, too, after the grinding for mid-terms."

A pearly mist covered the bay as the excursionists crossed, the next morning, but even before they had transferred to the Golden Gate ferry, the fog had begun to lift, and when they reached Sausalito, the sun was shining. It was a perfect November day, warm, yet with a moist salt breeze that was invigorating.

The party stepped off the train at Mill Valley and immediately started away past the old wooden mill from which the town takes its name. They followed the Pipe Line Trail through shady glens, over gurgling streams, and along the edge of sheer canyons. Steep, and dangerous in places, it was an exhilarating climb, even to these hikers who had tramped the trails of Yosemite. Wherever there was an opening in the foliage, they stopped to look down upon the panorama of velvety hills and shimmering blue water. Somebody started to sing, and they walked on briskly to the rhythm of

“California, California!
The hills send back the cry
You’ve got to do or die
For California, California.”

Still merry and unfatigued, they reached the grove of giant redwoods, named for the man who loved it so well—John Muir. The rustic inn was closed, there was no sign of life about, but the little party enjoyed the solitude. They wandered into the woods and, seating themselves at the foot of a great, red-barked giant, they set to work upon the luncheon baskets. Potato salad and stacks of sandwiches were laid upon a white cloth over a patch of moss.

“Get busy!” advised Mrs. Hartley, and the order did not have to be repeated.

“I’m not a bit hungry,” observed Robert, as he finished his fourth chicken sandwich and helped himself to another.

“Nor I,” added Florence, heaping a second helping of salad onto her cardboard plate.

Cake and fruit disappeared with like rapidity, despite the lack of the coffee they had hoped to procure at the inn.

“Isn’t this great?” yawned Betty, leaning back comfortably against a tree whose age had

four digits to it. "I do get tired of teas and hops and city life in general, now and then."

"Me, too," Charles agreed, drawing deep breaths of the woodsy air. "I was wishing me back in my little ole apple-orchard, just the other day."

"The idea of a Sophomore's being homesick!" teased Betty.

"It's been known to happen before," put in Florence, as Charles flushed slightly.

"Oh,—Marceil?" laughed Betty. "Well, she has cause. How would you feel if you had all those miles between you and home? But you should have seen her last winter! She was in her element up home in all the snow. I wish you could have seen that girl skate! She says that most everybody knows how, back East."

"I'd love to go back East for a winter, and enjoy all the winter sports."

"Why go so far? Come home with us, this Christmas, or if you'd rather spend Christmas at home, meet us in Truckee afterwards. We nearly always go up for the Carnival. Will you, Flo?" Betty ended eagerly.

Robert sat up and smiled his approval of the plan. "You'd love it!" he declared buoyantly.

“And fun! You’ll have the time of your life; take my word for it!”

“Marceil will probably come, too,” added Betty.

Florence’s eyes lighted. “I know I’d like it. And I’m sure Mother won’t mind if I run up just for a week or so. How long does it take to get to Truckee from Santa Barbara?”

“Two days, even less, if you make your connections so that there will be no long wait in Oakland.”

“I think I can manage it,” Florence beamed. “It will mean leaving home a week or ten days sooner, but ——”

“You’ll have almost two weeks at home anyway,” observed Betty.

“I’ll write Mother to-morrow,” Florence promised, and the talk of carnival time among the Sierra snows gradually gave way to a more serious trend.

“I wonder what we’ll all be doing ten years from now,” Robert interposed.

“I wager I can tell you what you two will be doing, if your dreams come true,” Florence challenged.

“What?”

“Betty will be inventing some new method of

spraying, that will permit her to work the spray gun all day long without killing the entire orchard."

Betty herself joined the laugh, for every one knew how she loved to "squirt the hose."

"Rob will dig down through a couple of miles of Arizona sand and find a city so old that all the histories will have to be revised."

"And Flo Essex?" Robert queried.

"She'll be cruising the world in her private yacht," Betty interpolated, "and when she hears about the wonderful spraying invention, or the newly discovered city, she'll frown, and wonder where she heard the name Arclift before."

"But where's the private yacht coming from?" Florence inquired, frankly puzzled.

"Oh, you'll marry a millionaire," Betty calmly assured her. "You're always longing for pretty things, and mansions, and trips around the world, and other little things like that."

"Yes,—only yesterday I was treated to an oration on the advantages of being wealthy," added Robert.

"Well, I do contend that it is convenient not to have to worry about money," Florence drawled thoughtfully, "but just last night I was thinking

of the various people I know who are very rich—the Carsons, and the Aldemeres, and our own sorority sister, Sheila Halton. They all seem so—sort of bored, as though they had already experienced all the interesting things and had nothing left to look forward to. I—I don't know just why it is, but they really don't seem so happy as we, who have to struggle for most everything we get."

"I think that's just the point," Mrs. Hartley interposed quietly. "Life loses its zest when there is nothing left to work for."

"I really think that's so," Florence nodded, "though you could never have convinced me of that fact last year, or even a few months ago." She was thinking particularly of her visit to Viola, and the longings it had bred in her heart.

"What *would* you like to be doing, ten years from now?" Robert asked, curiously.

"Some sort of work," Florence answered unhesitatingly, "revising the world's history, perhaps," she added, her eyes twinkling.

"And, as for me," Charles cut in, "I'll name my best variety of apple the 'Arclift,' after the spray inventor, and her distinguished cousin;

and I'll send you a barrel of them every week, Flo, to nibble at while you're writing your histories."

Florence's propensity for the combination of "an apple and a book" was well known, and the discussion of the future ended in a gale of laughter.

"Now that your destinies are quite settled, I think we had better be starting for home," Mrs. Hartley suggested.

They cleared away scraps and paper, repacked the baskets, and went back along the giant-guarded trail. They laughed and joked as busily as ever, and stopped here and there to admire deep, brush-choked canyons or lovely views over mountain and water. Charles whistled a sprightly march as they tramped, while his mother astonished them all by elaborating his theme with trills of her own, and bird calls which could deceive the feathered folk themselves. It was a day to be long remembered, and to be looked back upon with pleasure during the next week, when final examinations quieted the gaiety of campus life.

Christmas season was with them almost before they realized it. The Gamma Zeta holiday party

was strictly a "family affair," no outsiders being invited. This was the time when the girls found how much joy there is in giving, with no expectation of return. There were only two recipients at this Christmas party,—Gamma Zeta, and the orphanage. What fun it was to see the empty box addressed to the orphans gradually fill and overflow with packages of intriguing shapes and sizes, to contemplate the happy eyes that would look on them at Christmas time! And for those who "just could not help being curious," there was the exciting rustle of tissue paper, the snap of strings and ribbons, as one after another of Gamma Zeta's own gifts was opened and exhibited by the House-Mother. Such a profusion of embroidered linen, pictures, hand-painted china, candles, books, cushions, rugs! A stranger might have thought that some bride-to-be was being "showered."

Both Florence and Betty left for home the day after the Christmas party. Betty rode into Oakland to catch her train there, so that they could be together that last half-hour.

"Now, remember! I expect to see you in Truckee in two weeks," was Betty's parting ad-

monition, as they separated—one to go north, and the other south.

“I’ll be there!” replied Florence, with a cordiality that left no doubt of its genuineness. Such an invitation from a girl like Betty was surely one of the fine things of life.

CHAPTER XX

WINTER FROLICS

A SPLASH of moisture on her face awoke Florence, the day after Christmas, and she looked through the screen of the sleeping-porch out at a veil of falling rain. She hastily jumped up to roll her bed away from the open and pull down the canvas side-curtains. It was still quite dark, and a little chill. She crept beneath the covers again, shivering.

“Hope this means lots of snow in the mountains,” she yawned drowsily, and settled herself for another nap.

When she woke again, the sun was shining brilliantly. Her mother, in raincoat and helmet, was standing beside her cot, laughing. “Lazy! Aren’t you ever going to get up? It’s nearly nine o’clock.”

“Oh Mother!” Florence was instantly awake. “You’ve been for a walk in the woods; why didn’t you call me? It’s been ages since we’ve had a good tramp in the rain.”

“I didn’t want to wake you. It wasn’t so very pleasant, anyway. The grove was quite dark and

cold, and the constant drip-drip that we usually like was depressing. But you did miss a most gorgeous sky when the sun broke through the clouds. Hurry and get dressed. We're to call for Aunt Jean in the car, right after breakfast. She is very anxious to see the Mission before her train leaves."

Despite the eagerness with which Florence anticipated her first experience with snow, she looked forward reluctantly to the day of leaving home again. Each parting became harder instead of easier. There was "Doctor Dad" with his dignity sitting so absurdly upon him after his daughter had just rumped his hair and pulled his tie all askew with her impetuous embraces; and Mother, more tender and wistful than ever; and "Big Brother Jim," feeling so self-important over his gradually increasing practice, Jim, with his cherished brown moustache, Jim, who always looked so ridiculously young, in spite of his best efforts. Even Minna, quiet and taciturn as she was, seemed a part of their life, the life that Florence hated to leave. More than once she recalled her visit to Viola, and its effect on her, and wondered how she could ever have craved any sweeter home life than this.

Mrs. Essex and Florence did have their walk in the rain before the week was over. They had delightful shopping trips, long drives through the shady foothills, and once, a cool, invigorating dip in the surf. Hours, even minutes, were precious, this short vacation, and so Florence forswore the usual round of picnics and parties indulged in by the younger set, and spent her time with her own people.

The day before she was to leave for the Northern Sierras, came a night letter from Betty. "Have postponed our Truckee trip a day or two. Come directly to Snow City. We will go up together from here."

Florence suspected that things had not gone so well as expected. She read the message over and over, and even penned a reply, postponing her visit until another year, but she did not send it. After all, she had promised Betty this visit.

The train which bore her out of rose-bowered Santa Barbara was very warm and stuffy. She opened the window and slipped off her coat, gazing eagerly out over the hills for an occasional refreshing glimpse of the ocean.

It was unusually warm even in San Francisco,

next day, and when Florence boarded the train which was to take her to Snow City, she was almost certain that as far as the winter carnival was concerned, she was to be disappointed. Northward, beyond the glittering waters of the bay, through the valley, green and blossoming in defiance of the glaring sunshine, to Sacramento went Florence, so warm and lazy that she did not move from her seat during the ten-minute stop, but bought an ice-cream cone, cheerfully paying triple price for the privilege of having it brought to her. She breathed a sigh as the train moved out of the sultry city and roared northward again.

“Two hours, and then we’ll be getting into the mountains,” she reflected hopefully. “It ought to be a little cooler, by that time.”

And so it was. With the setting of the sun there was an abrupt drop in temperature. Windows were banged down all over the car, and it was not entirely for the purpose of keeping out the smoke and cinders of the tunnel region. With the first breath of mountain air, everybody seemed to wake up and, as the train rushed through the dark forests of the Sierra foothills, a decided animation took the place of the listless-

ness which had characterized the first stages of the long, hot trip.

At Colfax, Florence stepped off the train almost into the arms of Betty, who gave her an exuberant welcome. "We came down in our run-about," she explained, quite unimpressed with the fact that every word sent a visible puff of breath into the cold air. "Your baggage is all checked? Good! But we could have made room for it, anyway."

"Hello, Flo!" called Rob's cheery voice. "What's the matter? You're not freezing already, are you? Jump in the car. C'mon, Bet, help Flo fix the robe. There, this drive's going to be a little chilly. Maybe you girls had better take the stage, after all."

"No. I love this air," protested Florence, drawing deep breaths of it. "I've been sweltering all day."

"Really? It has been cold up here, though it was almost summery yesterday," observed Betty, as Rob turned the car out of the noisy railroad yard and they sped away over a forest-bordered, hard-packed road. "And Flo, we haven't had a bit of snow yet! I so hoped that we might, before you arrived. Even at Truckee, it has been

so warm that it's slushy. Will you be terribly disappointed if there isn't any carnival?"

"N-not too terribly," Florence answered uncertainly, "but, just the same, I'm determined to see some snow, even if it is slush. Can't we go to Truckee, just for a day, maybe?"

Betty giggled and administered an impulsive hug. "You're every bit as bad as Marceil," she said.

"As bad! I have a right to be much worse! She has played in the snow nearly all her life, and I have never even been near it!"

A swift run over a dark, woodland road, and they arrived at the Arclift cottage, quite ready to appreciate a seat by the fire and a supper of hot tamales with Betty's sweet little mother and tall, weather-burned father. Marceil came in with a box of butterhorns from the "Home-made Confectionery" store, and they feasted merrily.

"Remember the first time Marceil encountered a tamale?" twinkled Betty, expertly removing the meal from the corn-husks.

"I thought I'd never get through the corn wrappings," laughed Marceil, who could appreciate the joke now. "And the first mouthful

of what was inside tasted like liquefied red pepper. Ugh!"

To-night, she very carefully mixed the meal and meat with the hot sauce, determined to avoid a repetition of that first disillusioning taste of the famous Mexican delicacy.

They sat up late that night, discussing hopes and plans for the coming week, and listening to fascinating tales told by Mr. Arclift, who was a Forest Supervisor, and had had many exciting adventures.

"And now," Betty insisted at last, "I'm going to take you upstairs, Florence. After your long trip, you must be tired."

This was the signal for a general breaking up. Good-nights were said, and the girls climbed the stairs to the little guest-room.

"I'll come in and make a fire for you in the morning," offered Betty, turning to go to her own room. "There are coals in the stove, but they won't last very long."

"Oh, don't bother!" protested Florence. "I'll make the fire, if the room becomes chilly. I believe it's getting a little warmer outdoors," she added, raising the window. "The air is not so biting."

“Good-night, Flo. Remember to call me if you want anything.” Betty departed, leaving her guest to prepare for her much needed rest.

Next morning, Florence was awakened by some one gently shaking her. Her eyes flew open inquiringly.

“Good-morning, Sleepyhead!” Betty was laughing. “It’s nearly ten o’clock,—and I wish you’d sit up and look out of the window! Marss and I just couldn’t wait any longer to tell you.”

Florence sleepily turned her head on the pillow, and then promptly sat erect with a cry of delight. The outside air was filled with huge, downy flakes which scurried and danced about as they fell onto the thickly covered ground. The neighboring houses looked, to her uninitiated eyes, like so many frosted cakes, and the tree outside her window, like a lovely bride. The telephone wires, too, had been transformed to bridal ribbons.

She ran over to crouch by the window and drink in the full beauty of the scene. It seemed as though nothing but a miracle could have thus transformed the drab little town into a vision of Fairyland.

“How about a trip to Truckee, now?” sang

Betty gaily, and there was a strong chorus of "Ayes!"

They hardly waited to swallow a warm breakfast, in their anxiety to get out in the snow. Florence stepped timidly into the drift on the porch, not quite knowing what to expect. She ecstatically scooped up a great handful, reveling like a child in the lovely stuff.

"There's Rob, trying out his sled," cried Betty. "Let's take possession. Mornin', Rob! We're ready for a ride."

"All right. Plenty of room for all three of you. I'll pull you as far as the hill; then you can coast down, and I'll come after the sled."

With laughter and squeals of delight, the girls went skimming over the snow, eliciting smiles of sympathy, perhaps envy, from groups of their elders who walked sedately through the deepening drifts.

"Now," said Rob, when they reached the brow of the hill. "You steer, Betty, and watch out you don't run down anybody." He handed her the rope, gave them a shove, and off they went.

The snow was too deep to admit of much speed, but it was soft and moist, and the sled cut through it easily. Florence screamed like a

happy child, and, when they tumbled off at the bottom of the hill, she raised a rosy face to the others.

“We’re not a bit dignified, are we?” she said, but there was not much contrition in her voice.

“Who expects Sophomores to be dignified, anyway?” Betty inquired of the universe.

It seemed no time at all before Mrs. Arclift called them in to the midday dinner. They tumbled merrily up the steps, rosy with fun and laughter, and stamped the snow from their feet and brushed the flakes from their shoulders and caps.

“Here they come, bringing a whiff of fresh air and joy with them,” called Mr. Arclift from the sitting-room. He gazed approvingly at the glowing young faces. “I reckon you aren’t going to miss your share of it, even if you weren’t up with the first chimes, this morning.”

Mrs. Arclift hovered about like an anxious little banty, to see that her “chickens” were comfortable and warm. “Rob came in a while ago, just sopping wet,” she worried, “and the minute I got him into dry things, he wanted to go right out again.”

“Oh, but it’s such fun, Aunt Lou. We’re going to build a snow man this afternoon, aren’t we, Ladies?”

“Not just yet,” insisted the little mother. “Wait until it stops snowing and gets cold enough to dry some of the moisture. We don’t want any pneumonia patients looking sadly out the window at the others who were sensible enough to resist it for a while.”

Rob glanced furtively toward Florence and was relieved to find that she apparently took his aunt’s “babying” of him quite as a matter of course. It was easy to forget the dignity and responsibilities of college life, when one was under Mrs. Arclift’s motherly wing.

The long anticipated trip to Truckee was all that they had hoped it would be. Marceil and Florence, particularly, enjoyed the journey in the creaky little narrow-gauge train with its tiny stove. Robert and Mr. Arclift kept the fire roaring, as the brakeman seemed to be occupied elsewhere. There were other carnival-bound parties, and the air rang with rival songs and merriment.

Marceil was especially gay. She seemed to be in her element, and there was not a trace of

the girl who had earned the title of "the homesickest Freshman in the whole United States." It was she who discovered the old mansion fronted by two enormous palm-trees, which stood up bravely in the midst of snow-drifts.

"Funny, I've seen them that way so often," mused Betty, "and I never thought of them as being paradoxical. They do look queer though, don't they?"

"Queer! They look positively idiotic, like a scene from a ridiculous dream. No, I don't really think so, Flo," Marceil promptly added, "but I had to say something quick before you started getting poetical. I could just see the native daughter spirit in you ready to tell me that California is the only place on earth where palm-trees grow in snow-banks."

"Well, isn't it?" challenged Florence, and Marceil subsided.

For Florence, the Carnival was a greater event than for anybody else in their merry party. She was never to forget that first toboggan ride, that flying journey over the smooth, icy track, with the white landscape racing past, and the air all atwinkle with bits of frost. She would always

remember the gay jingle of sleigh-bells as they slid along woodland roads, past the dark-blue waters of Lake Tahoe; she would remember, too, her surprise when she first stood firmly balanced on two thin blades of steel. She had always thought skating a most dangerous and difficult art, and was pleasantly amazed when she found that, with Robert's help, she could go skimming over the ice as securely, if not as speedily, as the others; and that to fall on the ice usually meant no great injury, other than wounded pride. Before the end of the week, her proficiency and enjoyment had increased to such an extent that it was almost true when Robert laughingly exclaimed, "Flo would rather skate than eat!" She had missed her lunch, rather than cut short her hour on the ice. Marceil was not the only one who turned away reluctantly from the Winter Carnival.

"I don't know *when* I've had such glorious fun," Florence sighed, as the tiny train bore them south again. "I can see now, why palms and midwinter flowers sometimes get a little monotonous for you, Marss."

CHAPTER XXI

TEAM-WORK

EVEN after the varied experiences of vacation, it was surprisingly easy to slip back into the routine of college life, once the girls were on the campus again. And what a busy, happy spring term it was, with new classes, committee work, hops and proms, teams, and basket-ball practice.

Florence worked especially hard in basket-ball. She had already won honors in Parthe-neia, canoeing, tennis, and other more or less individual activities. Now she was anxious to prove to herself that she could do good team-work, too. Even Snow Queen became a trifle neglected, in favor of an extra half-hour of goal shooting or "skeleton practice." When training rules were announced, she kept them sedulously, even to the point of giving up all possible evening engagements in order that she might be assured of plenty of time to "be *in* bed by ten o'clock."

"You certainly are a conscientious little sub," remarked Sidney approvingly at dinner, when Florence persistently refused everything that was forbidden by training rules. "You'll be in

the pink of condition. Here's hoping that you get a chance to play."

"She'd die of happiness if she could sub for just five minutes in the Intercollegiate," teased Betty.

However, it did not look as though Florence were going to substitute at all. She did not care to admit, even to Betty, the disappointment with which she read the announcement that the Sophomore Basket-Ball team would take only one substitute when they were to play Mills College Sophomores,—for that substitute was not Florence Essex.

"It's perfectly right, though," she tried to reason with herself. "Gertrude is the best all-around player among us. I think I'm a wee bit better at goals than she, but then, she's at home in any position on the field. She's the only logical person to make a good emergency sub."

Nevertheless, Florence was disappointed. She hid her feelings under strenuous practice, and continued to live up to all the team rules. After all, it was worth while to play just for the fun of the game.

"Ten baskets out of twelve trials!" marveled

Betty, who stood watching her, one evening.

"You're getting better every day, Flo."

"It's fun, trying all the different tricks. I must practise that carom to-morrow. It never fails, if you find the right spot on the backboard."

"*If*," laughed Betty. "You can't be particular about spots, with a guard doing a pin-wheel in front of you."

"But it's easy to free yourself from your guard if you act quickly.—Good-night, Miss Bower."

"She's been watching you, Flo," confided Betty, as they hurried off the field. "Shouldn't wonder if she has changed her mind about taking only one sub. You'd be better than Gertrude, as forward."

"At shooting, perhaps; but Gert is so tiny and quick, she could flash the ball to the other forward and let her do the goal work. It would be silly to take two subs, don't you think? We may not need even one."

"You can't always tell. Hurry through your shower, will you, Flo? I want to stop a minute on Telegraph Avenue."

The evening before the Intercollegiate came, and there was still no change of plans concerning

the substitutes to be taken. Florence had quite given up hope of appearing with the team, though she still refused her coffee and a rich dessert which was very tempting.

"Telephone, Florence," smiled a little Freshman, coming in from the hall.

Betty looked up hopefully. It was easy to see what she thought it was. But the voice that came over the wire was not that of the athletic manager.

"Viola!" exclaimed Florence happily. "I had no idea you were back yet."

"Surprise!" laughed Viola. "Mother and I just got in yesterday. We came via the canal, direct from Cherbourg."

"What a glorious trip it must have been!"

"It was, and I'm going to tell you all about it when you run over to-night. We're at the Palace, but I'll have Ted meet you at the ferry, if you like. He and Louis are due any minute now. Can't you come over and complete the party?"

"Ted and Louis back, too!"

"Yes, do come. Ted is dying to tell you all his adventures. You're really one of the most appreciative listeners. We'll have supper at nine, just the five of us,—and, maybe, dance a little."

“Oh, I’d love it, Viola. It seems so long since I have seen you all!”

“Sweet child!” Viola laughed. “Try to catch the seven-twenty. I’ll send Ted to the ferry at eight o’clock.”

“Thank you, Viola. I’ll run up and dress right away.”

Florence had run upstairs and slipped her dress off hurriedly before she thought of training rules again. With a cry of dismay, she sank into a chair.

“What am I thinking of?” she wailed. “Nine o’clock supper and dancing,—the very night before the game! Of course, it really wouldn’t make any difference, as long as I’m not going to play,” she reasoned, “but then, there’s the spirit of the thing. Training isn’t up until after the game. O dear! I do want to see Viola, and Ted, and Louis.”

She glanced at the clock and vainly tried to figure a way to get to San Francisco and back before ten o’clock. “It’s impossible,” she decided dejectedly. “And it would only spoil their party. I’ll have to tell her to ask some one else. But I don’t want to!”

She put on her dress again, and went down-

stairs. The telephone was in use. She sat on the stairs debating wretchedly for five minutes. The telephone was free at last, and she went toward it determinedly but, just as she reached for it, the bell rang stridently.

“Gamma Zeta House,” she said wearily. “No, this isn’t Marjorie. I’ll call her.”

For another five minutes Florence waited impatiently, biting her lips, and picturing Viola’s resentment. Viola was not accustomed to having her invitations slighted. When she tried again, the bell began to tinkle ominously, but she signaled the operator resolutely.

“I’ve waited long enough,” she pouted. “Whoever you are, you can wait a little minute, too.”

“Hello, Viola?” she said at last.

“Yes, *cherie*. You’re not on this side already, are you?”

“No, Viola, I—I hate to tell you, but honestly, I—I oughtn’t to come. I was so pleased and grateful and surprised when you called, that I forgot everything else. But ——”

“Whatever is the matter, child? If it’s another engagement, can’t you break it? We’re leaving for the South to-morrow, and we *should* like to see you.”

"I know. It's dear of you. I want to see you, too, of course, but—well, training rules, you know. The Intercollegiate comes to-morrow."

"Oh, is *that* it? And you're going to play?"

"No, but I'm on the sub team; and we all keep training rules right up to the end, whether we play or not."

"But that's silly. What difference does it make, if you're not going to play?"

"But you see, we're considered members of the team, and we must abide by the rules."

"But it's so idiotic! If you were going to play, it would be different."

Florence's reply was interrupted by the "busy" signal.

"Don't you see, Viola—sportsmanship, you know. All the other girls are keeping training. It wouldn't be fair for me not to."

"Oh, I can see what you mean. I've been in training myself. But we're so anxious to see you! Of course, if you'd rather win a set of felt numerals ——"

"Viola! You know it isn't for the sake of the numerals. It's ——"

"I won't keep you, Florence. Some one is trying to get your line. We'd better hang up."

"I'm sorry, Viola."

A click was all that answered her. She hung up the receiver, forlornly trying to decide whether it was she or Viola who was acting unreasonably. The bell rang so vigorously that she jumped.

"Gamma Zeta House," she repeated automatically, into the mouthpiece. "This is Florence Essex. Oh! Yes, Miss Bower. Yes, of course. Indeed I can, but what about Gertrude? She really prefers it that way? Then I am to play the whole game!"

Two seconds later, she danced joyfully into her room, nearly upsetting Betty and a huge pile of books.

"Oh, Betts! I'm to play, after all! The whole game! Violet Eames has been called home,—our star forward, too. Isn't it too dreadful? How can I ever replace Violet Eames?"

Her exuberance gave way to nervous apprehension, but Betty was beaming. "Oh, you'll be all right. You're used to Nan's centre tactics, and once you get the ball—ten to one, it's a goal."

"But Marta's a wiz of a guard."

"It was only lately that I heard some one re-

mark that it was easy to evade a guard, if you were quick."

Florence laughed nervously. "I didn't know that my wisdom would be put to the test so soon. But Betty, isn't Gertrude a trump? She told Miss Bower that she preferred to have me play, and that she would go as emergency sub, just as she had planned."

"She knew that you would be likely to make more goals; but it was good sportsmanship, all right."

Florence quivered with excitement as she ran onto the field with the team, amid cheers and fluttering pennants. The whistle blew for line-up, and, in the sudden hush that followed, she could almost hear the agitated beating of her heart.

The toss-up, another shrill whistle, and the game was on. The ball went immediately to Mills; there was but a moment of play, and "Goal!" called the referee.

Florence walked to her place again, amid the din of Mills' cheering and California's cries of encouragement. The whistle had scarcely sounded when the ball was in Nan's hands. She

shot it to Julia, who, too closely guarded to risk a try for goal, sent it to Florence. Florence pivoted away from her guard, but the applause for this agility changed to groans. Florence's carom throw had failed, and the ball bounced back directly into the hands of Mills' guard. It passed quickly through centre, and Mills scored another basket.

"Mills 4, California 0," called the score-keeper.

Florence bit her lip, and dared not look toward the California rooters who were still good-naturedly calling encouragement.

"I sha'n't experiment with that carom again," she resolved.

The next three goals went to Mills, but California was gradually waking up to its opponents' lightning-like tactics. The play grew faster, the ball rallied up and down the field, eluding the forwards on both sides. There was a struggle near the line, and a Mills guard slipped over. The linesman's whistle shrilled.

"California's unguarded throw for goal," called the referee, handing the ball to Florence.

There was an awful hush as she took her place on the line. Her eyes and mind were concen-

trated on the iron ring. She must not fail! The ball flew up and descended in a graceful curve, straight through the basket. Florence relaxed with a satisfied sigh. She could not remember when the swish of the net, as the ball slid through, had ever sounded so gratifying.

At the end of the first half, the score-keeper called, "Mills 10—California 1."

"Not so bad, Mills. Keep it up," they cheered on one side.

"Fight, fight, fight, California," they sang on the other.

The successful free throw was just the encouragement that Florence needed. During the second half she played swiftly, alertly, determined to bring the California score nearer the level of Mills'; but the watchful guard already knew the play between Nan and Florence. They had to change their tactics. Twice Julia had the ball, and twice she allowed Mills' guard to gain possession of it on its way toward the basket.

"They have it all over us, Flo. I never saw a team play so well," she whispered during a respite, but Florence only tossed her head, and frowned.

She watched Julia's next futile attempt for

goal, shot to a place in front of the tall guard, and interrupted the ball on its way to centre. A quick, well-aimed shot, and she had scored a goal for California before her surprised guard knew where to find her.

“Mills 10—California 3.”

The Blue and Gold waved cheerily, a song broke out. In the next play, the ball went almost immediately to Julia. She took heart and made a desperate attempt for goal. The ball rolled entirely around the ring twice, and dropped through, accompanied by a concerted gasp.

“Mills 10—California 5.”

“Don’t let them climb, Mills.”

“Come on, California.”

The ball was at centre again, before half the excited crowd had noticed that Mills had scored again.

“Mills 12—California 5.”

There was no effort, now, to control the excitement. California shouted for a tie, and Mills cheerfully advised her team to “hold ’em,” after the manner of football rooters.

California was keenly watchful. Swift, silent passes to Florence resulted in two more goals for the Blue and Gold.

“Mills 12—California 9,” the scorer called.
“Five minutes to play.”

In the stand a positive babble ensued, but the players darted about silently.

“Mills 14—California 9.” California began to lose hope again, but not Florence.

She made another successful goal, and Mills began to make “sacrifice plays” to keep the ball out of her territory. But once their expectations disappointed them. Even Mills’ rooters laughed at the ease with which Julia scored a basket, after the ball had been fairly played into her hands by her opponents.

“Mills 14—California 13. Two minutes to play.”

Pandemonium broke loose in the bleachers, but every girl on the field was tensely silent. Again the ball began to rally back and forth. Mills made a hurried try for goal. California’s guard secured the ball and shot it back to centre. Julia dashed forward quickly, caught the ball, and dropped it. The guard who hastily secured it stopped, for Julia was standing perfectly still, her face contorted with pain. A whistle blew shrilly and the referee stepped up to inquire what was wrong.

“My hand!” Julia gasped, holding up that member, already blue and swollen.

“Time out.”

A nurse came forward and led her off the field, while Mills and California joined in a cheer for her. There was a moment of shocked quiet until the nurse announced, “Just a slight fracture, but it will be very painful for a while. Is there a substitute?”

Until this moment, Gertrude had sat very still, completely absorbed in the game. There was a prolonged cheer as she threw off her “big C” sweater and ran onto the field.

“Mills 14—California 13, one minute and a half to play.”

The whistle blew; the excitement revived. The players threw themselves into a last desperate struggle. Florence’s guard fairly dogged her, even when the ball was far off toward the opposite goal. California’s centres grew timid and rallied the ball between them, in a vain hope for an advantage. Mills gained possession, and Florence intercepted a pass from guard to guard. Thirty seconds to play!

She was in a corner, her guard between her and the basket. She could not pivot away from

her; the only hope for goal was by a quick, overhead throw; that would mean a tie. It took but an instant for these thoughts to flash through Florence's mind. California began to cheer, and it seemed that Mills was waiting, resigned. Nobody doubted that Florence would bring the score to a tie. Suddenly she caught Gertrude's eye, excited and eager. Gertrude was near the basket, practically unguarded. With an easy throw, Gertrude could make a goal without having to resort to overhead. She could make the full two points instead of just one.

"One, two, three, four," counted the referee, as Florence hesitated. "Five ——" But Florence's jumping guard had not expected a side-arm throw. The ball spun past her into Gertrude's outstretched hands; in another instant, it was in the basket. The whistle blew.

"Time up! Final score, California 15—Mills 14." The score-keeper's voice was drowned in a burst of song addressed to Gertrude.

Florence stood near the side-lines while the "minute-and-a-half sub" was showered with congratulations. Some one grasped her hand and shook it heartily.

"Say," smiled Robert Arclift, "I used to think

that girls always worked for their own particular glory, but that—that last play of yours was the best bit of team-work I've seen in a long time."

Florence smiled gratefully, and went to join the crowd who were heaping praises upon the "minute-and-a-half sub."

CHAPTER XXII

TED

A FEW days later, Betty bounced into the room in her usual breezy manner, but stopped short to stare at Florence, who was sitting on the window-seat, frowning over a letter.

"What's the matter, Honey, bad news?"

"No, *good* news."

"Oh, it's a relief to see you smile. You did look so queer when I came in," said Betty. "But I suppose it was only pretty pensiveness. What is the good news?"

"A letter from Viola. She apologizes very charmingly for her brusqueness the other night, and tells me informally about her engagement. It's not to be announced until next month."

"Viola engaged? Whom is she going to marry?"

"Louis Wimbleton."

"Louis! Still, they've known each other for years, haven't they? And Viola is just practical enough to keep him from floating away on a cloud. And she's so dark, and he so fair, they are a lovely contrast. I never dreamed that they

cared for each other, though, of course, I don't know either of them as well as you do." Betty rattled on for some minutes before she observed that Florence was still gravely pensive.

"Flo, what is the matter? Aren't you pleased?"

"Oh, yes indeed! But Viola's letter made me think of—Ted."

"Well? I thought you liked Ted."

"I do. I'm wondering whether I like him well enough to ——" she hesitated doubtfully and then added, "Betty, the other night Ted told me he was going away again, perhaps for a long time, and—he wants me to promise to marry him when he comes back."

"Oh-h-h-h," a long-drawn-out gasp. "Just think what that would mean, Flo, to marry a Carson!"

"I know. I used to pine for the very things that Ted can give me, and I do love ease and luxury as much as any kitten; but I'm trying not to think of that. I want to think only of Ted. I like him, but I'm not sure that I care enough. I want to be sure.—It all came about so unexpectedly, just at the mention of his going away."

"And the heroine sighed, 'This is so sudden!'" laughed Betty, but she immediately became serious. "Flo dear," she began quietly, "I love you, and I want you to be happy. I think you would be, with Ted and his people, if you love him. You could do justice to them all, and they're fond of you. If you and Ted really care for each other, I think you would both be ideally happy."

Betty's voice quivered with earnestness as she spoke, and there was a huskiness in it that brought the tears to Florence's eyes. The two girls sat for a long time, hand in hand, silenced by the realization that childhood days had slipped past them, and that even the carefree comradeship of girlhood must have an ending.

As it turned out, a change of plans kept Ted in California for several months. He and Florence drifted back into their old comradesly attitude toward each other, and Ted considerably refrained from direct reference to the question which he knew Florence was not ready to answer. He, too, wanted her to be sure before she gave him the word that was to decide so much for both of them.

College days flew by, bringing spring pageants, field days, and regattas—the festivities at last giving way to final examinations. Examination time was hard, but there was always a sense of anticipation about it, for ahead lay three months of freedom, and *home*.

Home! What a joy it was to wake up blinking at Mother's cheery morning smile, to have her near, day and night, to call on when the perplexing problems involved in the business of growing up became too burdensome.

"Ted is fine in every way, and his wealth has not spoiled him," Mrs. Essex told her, during their first long talk, "but I must not influence your answer, dear. I would not think too much about it now, if I were you. Your own heart will tell you, beyond a doubt, when the right man comes."

Florence was comforted by the look of trust and understanding in her mother's eyes, and she knew that she was right.

She easily drifted back into the round of summer fun and frolic to be had in Santa Barbara. Snow Queen and her fair young rider were seen on the woodsy trails again; the little coupé tooted merrily over winding mountain roads and shin-

ing highways, the yachts of various friends took Florence as a passenger on trips to the islands in the channel.

Ted and Viola came into town occasionally. Robert Arclift passed through, on his way to join the Archeological Society in New Mexico. Sidney Cartwright dropped in for a brief visit, while her contingent of the Sierra Club were preparing for a walking tour of the Southern Sierras.

It was a summer of fun and relaxation, and, though there was no extensive tour, or absence from home, it was one of the happiest seasons that Florence had ever known. Berkeley beckoned as irresistibly as ever that fall, but it was with reluctance that Florence saw vacation drawing to a close.

CHAPTER XXIII

BEAUX!

JUNIOR year brought about a change which, to both Florence and Betty, seemed almost unbearable. Betty, as earnest as ever in her pursuit of Agriculture, was transferred to the University Branch at Davis, where she and other students of that science were given an opportunity to apply the theory that they had studied for the past two years. Florence was to stay on at Berkeley, though both chums came very near changing their majors in order to continue their college life together.

Months of "the best year in college" passed away before Florence could turn toward her room at the Chapter House—the same one she had shared with Betty for two years—with any degree of cheerfulness. She had a room-mate, of course, but even if Sophie Cresson had not been a shy, studious Freshman with an overwhelming passion for Zoölogy, even if she did not always bring with her a scent of formaldehyde and an unvoiced, but obvious, disdain for anything that could not be pinned down and scientifically dis-

sected, Florence could not have allowed her to usurp Betty's place. Sophie and Florence occupied the same room, but they were not room-mates in that cosy, comradely sense which draws two girls into a lifelong friendship.

When Florence took her evening walks up into the canyon, Marceil or Jerry might go with her, never Sophie. Marceil it was, who galloped beside her in her morning rides on Snow Queen, Marceil who inveigled the canoeing manager to allow them to go on the lake together, despite their different numerals. Occasionally, Sadie Erna was accorded one or two of the privileges that had always been Betty's; but *only* occasionally. Sadie's life was entirely absorbed with Martha's. Where Martha could not go, Sadie refused to. Though others thought this an unnecessary sacrifice, Sadie was happier than she had ever been before. Martha was well-known and loved, and, in serving her, Sadie felt the sublime satisfaction of one who knows that her service is of help to the world, as well as to the individual. Martha Prime was destined to become great. There was, now, no doubt of that.

Betty, perhaps a bit selfishly, was more pleased than otherwise at Florence's reports on

her room-mate. Betty did not want Florence to like Sophie Cresson *too* well. As for herself, she dwelt in a tiny "housekeeping room," on Main Street, where she (to use her own words) "could practice culinary and domestic art between the hours spent among the cows and alfalfa." "And you must manage to spend a weekend with me, Flo," one of her letters ended. "You remember, I promised that I'd show you how to run a tractor some day. And I can, now. Just come up and see me!"

In the short visits during which the two girls managed to be together, they clung to each other and talked such a steady stream that an outsider might have fancied their next farewell was to be their last.

But, as winter wore away into spring, a subtle change crept into the relations of the two friends. They enjoyed each other's company as much as ever, greeted each other with lavish affection whenever they met, but both returned to their respective residences more contentedly. There was less of the constant "I miss you so" in their letters and conversation. Perhaps the return of the Carsons to San Francisco had something to do with it.

Mrs. Carson and Viola had taken an apartment in the Bay City, and Ted, back from his travels, was often with them. Of course, this meant that both Ted and Viola had much time to be in Berkeley, and that Florence often spent a week-end with the Carsons.

As for Betty, her mother managed to be with her for weeks at a time, since Mr. Arclift's forest duties kept him away a good deal. We must not fail to mention the fact that Charles Hartley was also doing laboratory work at Davis, and was achieving great success with his own methods of grafting and pruning. Betty found his work as interesting as her own and spent many of her spare hours among the blossoming fruit-trees of Charles' "own orchard," a background which even this unromantic youth deemed vastly becoming to her.

Florence was not the only one upon whom Betty's absence cast a spell of gloom. Cousin Robert, accustomed to her sisterly companionship ever since the dark days when he had lost his parents, seemed utterly at sea without her. Not even Florence, whom he had long treated with the same frank brotherliness, could coax him out of his dungeon. He developed a sudden

shyness in her presence. Only on the rare occasions, when Betty was with them, was he his old, fun-loving self.

While Florence gave most of her engagements to the prepossessing Ted Carson, Robert let himself slip gently into the background. He spent days and weeks among his male colleagues and friends, working diligently on *Advanced Archeology* and *The Technique of Reconstruction*. Occasionally, on his jaunts afield, he would pick up some relic, a perfect arrow-head, or an Indian amulet, and he would tuck it away carefully, to send to Florence. Then he would remember the antique chain that Ted had given her, and the arrow-head or amulet would be handed over to a fellow student who had not been fortunate in obtaining a souvenir.

Florence missed Robert's comradeship, and his apparent indifference troubled her. But Ted was more attentive than ever, and there were times that she was glad she did not have to contend with Robert's heretofore taken-for-granted demands upon her time. She had, however, looked forward to Robert's company during Junior Week, when Betty and Charles would be present for the fun. Robert remained conspicu-

ously absent for so long that Florence at last acceded to Ted's repeated offer to act as her escort during the festive week.

She had a happy time at both the Prom and the Farce. It was impossible to do otherwise, with such an attentive and popular partner; but, just the same, it was not quite as she and Betty had planned it. Betty had become strangely silent the moment she heard that Rob was away on a field trip, and that Ted Carson was to be one of their party; but, of course, she made no remark, and so their plans were carried out, regardless of the change.

Florence had a small part in the Farce, but she finished in time to come "out front" for the last act. Ted's smiling greeting hinted of relief, as well as pleasure. It was evident that their little party was not the unified group it would have been, had Robert been one of them.

At the Prom, Florence saw little of Betty and Charles after the mutual exchange of dances. It could not be denied that their attempt to make a "party" of the week-end had been a sad failure, yet neither girl could have denied that she had had a good time. Their escorts saw to that.

When Florence looked back to it later, she

could not help reflecting that, from that weekend, dated a sudden widening of the rift that had developed in her friendship with the Arclifts. There was no definite word said, not even a sign of coldness, but the rift was there. She tried to assure herself that it was entirely due to Betty's absence and Robert's dependence on her, but she was not satisfied with this explanation. There was something lacking in Betty's letters, now. Somehow Florence felt that she was gradually losing two very dear friends, and the thought frightened her.

"No fault of mine, either," she fretted. "Why should I give up either the Carsons or the Arclifts, just because they refuse to mix?"

Days flew by, Florence becoming more and more absorbed in affairs that took her away from Berkeley into a world of society debs, artists, musicians, and men of affairs. Her name began to appear in Mrs. Carson's guest lists, along with a few others of the Berkeley younger set. More than once she proudly officiated at teas and buffet suppers, still finding a childish pleasure in the deference accorded her as "quite an intimate friend of the Carsons."

She was overwhelmed with pleasure when

Viola, in a sweetly intimate little note, asked her to be one of the eight bridesmaids at her wedding.

“I thought of having a very simple one,” she said, “but Louis is such a lover of beauty and pageantry, he will like an elaborate wedding, as much as I.”

Florence never forgot that rosy experience, the days of planning and rushing about, the privilege of seeing Viola’s elaborate gifts and ever-increasing trousseau, the hurried trip south, followed by long hours at the dressmaker’s, the cloud of delicate blue tulle and lace which was gradually molded into a “perfectly heavenly” dress for her,—and finally, the great day itself.

She could hardly have been more excited if it had been her own wedding. The first peal of the great cathedral organ sent an ecstatic thrill through her as she walked forward, one of the colorful human bouquet to precede the bride. She took her place in the line of attendants and glanced at Louis, as Viola came up. His radiant happiness was as clearly written on his face as was hers. Florence’s thoughts became tumbled and incoherent as the ceremony progressed. How strange that she had not observed how much they cared for each other! What a lovely pic-

ture they made together, just the two. Was ever bride so exquisite as Viola?

There was a stir. The ceremony had ended. Louis and Viola were turning to walk back—man and wife. The ushers stepped up. As Florence took Ted's proffered arm, she glanced up to see him studying her smilingly, and she hastily looked away.

What an elaborate and merry feast that wedding breakfast was! Delicately tinted organdie table-cloths, profusion of flowers, and dainty food disguised as petals, rings, and bells! Viola's going away, amid a veritable storm of rice! Florence caught the bouquet.

"I wanted you to," Viola whispered, braving another storm of rice to give her a farewell kiss. "Good-by, dear. Be good to Ted, while I'm gone."

The din and merriment and showering rice went on, all unheeded by Florence, as Viola and Louis stepped into their limousine and sped away. Viola's words had pleased her, and suddenly left her cold. Somehow her own response to the affection of the Carsons did not satisfy her.

"Miss her already?" a voice behind her recalled her to her surroundings. "But you'll see

her often," Ted added reassuringly. "They're dancing in the Blue Room. Don't you want to come in?"

Florence clutched Viola's bridal bouquet spasmodically. Ted glanced at it, and looked into her eyes smiling.

"I don't care to dance, Ted. Please excuse me."

"Oh, I say! I'm awfully glad to see you two so fond of each other, but Flo, this isn't Viola's *funeral*, you know."

His voice was boyishly pleading. He took the prophetic bouquet from her and laid it on a table, and Florence waltzed into the room with him, suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that Ted Carson's future regard for her would depend on her own acts and words. For a chaotic moment she hesitated, and then, smiling impersonally, she began to chatter glibly of college fun and frolic.

CHAPTER XXIV

SENIOR DAYS

BETTY came back to Berkeley for her Senior year, and things gradually became normal again for her and Florence. She began to take the goings and comings of Ted Carson quite for granted. When the usual "foursome" got together for a party or picnic, it was always Florence who instigated it, never Betty. Robert was seldom in Berkeley but, when he was, he found both his sisterly playmates ready to welcome him.

Almost immediately after graduation, Robert had gone to the canyons and deserts of New Mexico with a party of archeologists who shared his enthusiasm for reconstructing the ancient civilization of America. He wrote long, interesting letters about his days on the trail and in camp, and, when he returned, at various intervals, he found Florence quite as eager to listen to his tales as to those of Ted Carson.

"You'd love this sort of thing, Flo," he told her once. "Digging up tangible history, so to speak; and you never know what wonderful discovery is going to be uncovered next. Why, just

the other day we came upon a council-chamber with all its ancient rituals.”

“It must be fascinating. Why can’t girls do interesting things like that?”

“They do. There are three women in our expedition now; the secretary and the recorder are both women, and the superintendent’s wife goes on all his excursions with him.”

Often, when he sat dreaming beside the camp-fire, Robert thought of Florence’s face as he had seen it that day, glowing with a mixture of enthusiasm and something deeper. But he still felt vaguely hopeless, when he contrasted the life he could offer Florence with the luxury and social position that Ted Carson might give her.

“What right have I to stand in her way, anyhow?” he often thought. “Only, she is the dandiest pal, more understanding than Betty, even.” And as Betty had also done, he fell to ruminating dismally on what life without Florence would be; for, if Florence should become a Carson, their paths must necessarily diverge, whether or not she herself were willing.

Betty continued to philosophize as ruefully, and was more tenderly affectionate, than ever, as one is inclined to be, when the parting of the

ways approaches. Florence sensed this, but she attributed it entirely to the natural regret of a Senior who sees her college days drawing to a close.

"I have something to tell you. You'd better come along," Betty whispered, one evening, when Florence protested that it was too cloudy to do laboratory work at the observatory.

"Can't you tell me here, just as well?" asked Florence absently, drawing aside the curtain to look up at the overcast sky. "Look, Betty; there's only one wee star shining, and that'll be hidden in a minute."

"Come for a walk, then. No quiet hours tonight; we can't talk here without somebody's bursting in on us."

"Goodness, is it as serious as all that?" Florence laughed, peering through the dark at Betty's face. "All right. I'll take my bundle of Sophomore 'psych' papers and grade them while we're waiting for Saturn and the other celestial guests to make their appearance. It may clear up."

Betty was very quiet as they left the house and joined the scattered groups of students who were campus-bound. Florence chattered glibly, insisting on gazing skyward despite threatening curb-

stones and Betty's attempt to bring her attention earthward.

"It's really a glorious night though, isn't it?" she sighed. "See the moon just peeping over the edge of that silver cloud-bank, and look, Betty,—don't those palms make a perfect tropical silhouette? But what was it you wanted to tell me?" she asked finally.

Betty slowed her step and looked toward her with a self-conscious little smile. "Haven't you the least idea, Flo? Not the very least?"

Florence stopped short and looked into her face, illumined by the fitful moonlight, but by something else, too, a glow which came from within.

"Betty!" A long silence, and then, "You are engaged to Charles!"

"Of course! Kiss me, Flo. You're the only one besides Dad and Mother who knows. I'm not going to announce it for a while yet."

Florence administered a hug that would have done credit to the California Bear, and followed her embrace with a deluge of eager questions. How long had she been engaged? When was she to be married? Was it to be a "big" wedding, or just a simple one?

"I've been engaged a week," began Betty methodically. "We're to be married next fall some time. I don't know about the wedding, we haven't made any definite plans yet, except that you're to be maid-of-honor, unless ——"

"Unless what?"

"Unless you've forsaken us for some far-off corner of the earth," Betty answered significantly.

"Oh, but I sha'n't. I think I'm going to stay right here in Berkeley and work for a Master's degree in History." Florence spoke steadily, but she did not convince Betty. It was obvious that, at that particular moment, she was thinking of something quite different from a Master's degree in History. Betty thought she knew just what, and sighed. There was a shadow in her glow of happiness.

Their arrival at the observatory cut short further conversation, but, after a half-hour of unsatisfactory glimpses of the heavens, they left the building and strolled back across the campus, forgetting all things save the absorbing topic of the moment. Once or twice Betty deliberately changed the subject and gave a hint of her curiosity concerning Florence. In reply she got

only a dreamy glance, and a wistful smile that confirmed her suspicions. Florence was not engaged, no,—but she would be before long. Betty, in her newly acquired wisdom, was quite certain that she knew Florence's mind better than the girl herself did. Yes, Florence was going through a pleasant, but disquieting, stage of indecision. For Betty, there was no uncertainty about it. She looked at Florence's dreamy face and nodded her dark head wisely. Ah yes, she knew!

Senior year flew by, and still Florence confided nothing to Betty. There were "linen showers" and "kitchen showers" and other engagement parties for Betty. Plans for the wedding began to take definite shape, Florence insisting that "no matter what happened," she would be present on the great occasion. It was that little "no matter what happened" that troubled Betty. She frowned and worried, unobtrusively watching Ted Carson whenever she had the opportunity, only to renew her conclusion that Ted Carson was very fond of Florence, and that Florence was very fond of him, though she had not admitted that fact, even to herself, yet. Florence was not going to allow him to become serious

until she was quite sure of herself. That seemed obvious to Betty. Somehow, she could not bring herself to the point of unmitigated gladness over the prospect of Florence's marrying Ted Carson.

"It's selfishness, pure selfishness!" she rebuked herself, and then began to wonder if it were, if—somewhere in her thoughts, an anxiety for Florence's happiness were not contending for supremacy.

"Betty, where are you going to live after you're married?" Florence queried, as they sat in their room sorting notes and putting their binders in order for the final examination period.

"Why, at Charles' ranch, of course!" Betty answered, in some surprise. "I'm just dying to get my hands on the place," she added, enthusiastically. "I'm going to show Charles that he can't monopolize those pet trees of his."

"I'm glad it's a fruit ranch, Betty. I'd hate to think of you as tending cows and pigs, and squawky old chickens."

"Poetic old dear," Betty laughed. "You'd rather visualize me among pink and white blossoms, or tending prize rose-bushes, wouldn't you? Well, I won't disillusion you."

"Oh, I know that fruit ranching isn't all

poetry and orange blossoms, but it's better than pigs and chickens."

"I *told* you you'd lose interest in my pets, living in an atmosphere of antique jewelry, and fruit salad served on crushed ice."

Florence flashed her a keen, inquiring glance. "What a combination—antique jewelry, and fruit salad! But that isn't fair, Betty. You know very well that I never did like pigs, or any of their relatives. And, as for the fruit salad atmosphere, as you call it, I can manage very well without it."

"Of course," Betty answered pensively. "We can all do without luxuries, when we have to, but you won't have to. You'll be surrounded with beautiful things all your life, and you ought to be. You love them, and can do justice to them."

Her eyes were on her work, and so she did not notice the expression on Florence's face. It was some time before she realized that her tongue had betrayed her secret conclusions. She looked up. Florence was smiling, as though amused, but her brow was creased by a faint frown of vexation.

"She's wondering how I knew," Betty decided, "and, even now, she won't tell me. I'm not to know until she is ready to tell everybody. Oh,

you may smile away, sly little Flo. You think I don't know." Her thoughts went spinning on while they worked in silence.

A sudden burst of music from the fraternity house next door, competition from a piano downstairs, and a squeaky phonograph across the street, reminded the girls that it was Friday night, and that Berkeley is not particularly studious on Friday nights.

"We almost forgot the gym rally!" exclaimed Florence, jumping up excitedly. "Come on, we mustn't miss it. It may be a long, long time before we'll have a chance to get into a U. C. gym suit again."

"Yes, and Professor Burr is going to show us some tumbling stunts and Indian club drills," added Betty, enthusiastically.

They pushed aside their books and hurried out, thoughts of the future temporarily forgotten in behalf of the gym rally, that jolly, informal last meeting of Physical Education enthusiasts like Florence and Betty. For an hour, their thoughts and physical selves were entirely occupied with relay races, mock basket-ball, and acrobatics. Laughing and glowing with fun and exercise, they, at last, left the gymnasium and

crossed the dark campus toward the Chapter House.

Once in their own room, their animated babble gradually subsided. The inevitable thought that the rally marked "the beginning of the end" began to creep into their consciousness, try as they would to evade it. Florence looked about the cheery room, every nook of which had become dear from years of association. Next fall, she and Betty would be gone. Some one else would take possession of the room that had been theirs for so long. It didn't seem right. This was *their* room; how could it ever belong to any one else? As she snapped out the light and raised the curtain, she gazed up at the dark-blue, star-clustered sky, and began to hum the song of the California Bear.

“ ‘ Oh, have you seen the heavens blue
Where just seven stars are shining through?
Right overhead a jovial crew,
They're joining hands to make the bear.’ ”

Look, Betty, there he is, shining as bravely as ever.”

Betty strolled over to put an arm about her, and they stood there in the dark, silently gaz-

ing up at the celestial symbol of their Alma Mater.

“ ‘Our sturdy Golden Bear is watching from the skies,’ ” she sang softly.

“Just think,” Florence interrupted, “no matter where we may be, in the years to come, we can always look up and see him, our California Bear.”

“Yes, no matter where we may be,” Betty answered. “Then you don’t plan on coming back for your M. A.?”

Florence shrugged impatiently. “I said ‘in the years to come.’ Betty, you’re hopelessly unpoetic, bringing me back to earth with such a jolt. I don’t see how you *can* look up at a sky like that, and think of such prosaic things as Master’s degrees.”

Betty was a little hurt by this reply. “Well, if you won’t tell me, you won’t,” was her unvoiced thought, “but I should think you might tell *me*, even if you do think you’re going to surprise us all with an announcement at the Senior Banquet.”

“Did I tell you that Rob had decided to come for the Senior Ball?” she said aloud.

“No, but he told me himself, Precious. He

couldn't go and disappoint us, when we've planned it this way ever since we were Sophomores."

"No, but 'circumstances sometimes alter cases.'"

"True, though not particularly original," Florence responded calmly. "Did you ever hear that 'Love is blind'?" she ended with a mischievous laugh as she ran out, leaving her roommate more mystified than ever.

CHAPTER XXV.

CAP AND GOWN

“It is already proven that this ancient civilization antedates the pyramids and sphinx of Egypt, and the discoveries of the future will no doubt open the pages of an ancient *American* lore that will silence Old World scoffers, who claim that America’s history is all in the future.”

With this sentence, Florence finished her last examination, and ended her career as an undergraduate. Something of this realization penetrated her consciousness, and tempered the relief with which she capped her pen and closed her “blue-book.” She glanced at the clock. It was fifteen minutes before the close of the three-hour examination period. A sudden reluctance to put an end to her academic life tempted her to dally. She opened her blue-book again, and carefully reread her answers, adding a little here and there, and making minor changes. The clock struck, just as she began to read her last sentence.

“The end!” she gasped.

It was the end of her Senior year! The last sentence she had written held a prophecy for the future. She wondered about her own future, hoped that in that vague prophecy there would be something personally hers, some work to do, perhaps the privilege of helping to record a history, yet unwritten.

She was still pensive as she entered the chapter house, where Betty and the other Seniors were discussing the momentous question of "what to wear" at the various festivities of Senior week.

"Ah'm goin' t'make mah white spoht dress do for aivrything except the Banquet and the Ball," drawled Margaret Montague. "It'll be right to wear under mah cap 'n' gown at the Baccalaureate, and Commencement, and it's just the thing for the Pilgrimage."

"Sensible Marg," Miriam Byrne approved. "Personally, I think it's a shame that our class color is red. A green bow would set me off so much better, and—red, against my hair! It's a positive crime."

"But you wear the bow on your parasol, silly," remarked Marceil, unsympathetically. "The red bow will be a safe distance from your fiery head."

"Just the same, a green bow would be prettier," pouted Miriam.

"You mi-i-ight wait a year to graduate," advised Margaret. "The Juniors' color is green," and Miriam was silenced.

"What are *you* planning to wear, Flo?" queried Betty.

"I believe in Margaret's plan. Two dresses are really enough. My white tailored crêpe will do for Baccalaureate, Pilgrimage, and Commencement; and my shell-pink taffeta for the Banquet and Ball."

"But what about Extravaganza, and the President's tea?"

"We're all *in* Extravaganza, aren't we? Betty's the Jester, and Miriam is the Fire-dancer, and Marceil and I are California poppies."

"The idea of importing California poppies from Boston!" scoffed Margaret. "Ah guess you all are in the Extravaganza, 'ceptin' me. Ah spoilt mah chainces when Ah cracked that B flat in the tryouts," she added comically.

"Well, did we decide about the tea?" some one asked, above the laughter.

"Same as any other tea," Betty suggested. "Hats, dressy suits, and white gloves, with a

corsage, if you like; we'll be stopping just the tiniest minute, anyway. By the way, Flo, you promised to help me with the hem of my evening gown. We'll have to hurry, if I'm to get to the Banquet in that dress."

Betty seemed unduly excited about the Senior Women's Banquet. She was nervous and fidgety while the almost completed gown was being tried on.

"Heavens! Does the prospect of announcing your engagement affect you so terribly?" queried Florence, after the sixth attempt to adjust the hem, while Betty danced and pivoted about.

Betty was instantly still. "Oh, no. There won't be any excitement in that. Most everybody knows about it already. I rather wish I hadn't told any one, but just kept my little secret until the Banquet. I imagine that more than one girl *has* done that."

"Yes, there are always some unexpected announcements at the Banquet," Florence replied, with tantalizing calmness. Betty was disappointed.

The Senior Women's Banquet proved to be a happy affair, notwithstanding the shadow of parting that hung over it. Toast-mistress and

speakers all added their share of humor to the anecdotes of the past and the prophecies for the future. Each course was enlivened by happy reminiscences, and by California songs. Just before dessert, there was a sudden, expectant hush. A smile lighted every face as a tiny girl made her appearance. She was draped in a long white robe with ermine train, decked with hearts. Her crown was a huge engagement ring.

“The Queen of Hearts has a token for each of you,” began the toast-mistress, “her only request is that you each choose appropriately.”

The little Queen started around the long table, laughing with the rest as one after another picked from her basket a symbolic thimble. Betty was the first to choose a ring, and as she rose amid applause and flower petals to “tell his name,” a volley of questions shot back and forth along the table. Betty’s announcement seemed to have been the signal, and the shower of petals, cheers, and questions continued intermittently, all around the table.

“There must be a hundred!” exclaimed Betty’s left-hand neighbor.

But Betty’s attention was on the basket, now on the other side of the table, approaching Flor-

ence. Florence's hand was dipping into it. Betty was not the only one who waited, expectantly. The hand came up, closed. She caught Betty's too-eager glance, and laughed mischievously, raising her fingers slowly to reveal—a thimble! The basket passed on, the girl next to Florence chose a ring, and the attention of every one but Betty was diverted. She sank back, studying Florence's face incredulously, until a song to the engaged girls interrupted her puzzled revery. The merriment at last gave way to the hymn-like notes of "All Hail, Blue and Gold," and the Senior Banquet was ended.

"You funny dear," was Florence's greeting, when the two girls were alone in the back seat of Miriam's sedan. "You blind little—it must be because you're in love." She seemed hugely amused, but was irresistibly affectionate.

"What do you mean, Flo?" begged the puzzled Betty. "Then, you *are* engaged?"

"N-not quite, I haven't said 'yes,' yet, but ——"

"But you're going to?"

"Yes. Oh, you precious, blind Betty! I love you almost as much as Rob!"

"As *Rob!!*"

“Yes. I know you thought it was Ted, and I just couldn’t resist the temptation to tease you. You’ll forgive me, won’t you? You really deserved to be teased. Every time I thought of Rob, you insisted on talking about Ted, and when we made plans for the future, you just couldn’t see anything but your own jumpity conclusions. Really, Betsey, you vexed me, sometimes.”

“But, why didn’t you tell me? How should I know that it was Rob, all this time?”

“He made me promise, Betty, that I wouldn’t tell you, unless I decided to say ‘yes.’” Florence’s happy smile was irresistible, and Betty leaned over to wish her happiness in her own impulsive way.

“It’s just too good to be true,” she exulted. “It’s what I’ve hoped for. Flo dear, neither you nor Rob can be any happier than I about it. Does Ted know?”

“Not about Rob, but I told him, long ago, that we could never be any more than friends. I do like Ted, and admire him greatly, but that isn’t—love. I knew who it was I loved, when Rob went away.”

The Extravaganza, like many another dramatic

event in which Florence had taken part, passed like a colorful dream, almost before she could realize that the weeks of rehearsal were over. With the laying aside of her gay poppy costume, she seemed to end, too, the period of revelry, and to settle down to the more formal events of Commencement Week. On the morrow, she and her classmates would don cap and gown, and assemble in the Greek Theatre to hear the Baccalaureate Sermon.

It was a benediction and a farewell. In all the throng of graduates, there was not a face which did not show a response to the emotion of the occasion. There was a suspicious moisture in more than one pair of eyes.

Thoughts of farewell were even more pronounced on the following day, when Senior men and girls arrayed themselves in white, in honor of the formal leave-taking. At ten o'clock, that sunny morning, the long white procession started across the byways of the campus, which this group would never tread again, as undergraduates. The only bit of color in the long line was the red of the bright bows atop the parasols carried by the girls.

One after another, the favorite haunts and

buildings of the campus were touched and bidden farewell. There was no attempt to hide the fact that now, at last, the dear associations of college life were ending. It *was* farewell; as a beloved teacher or classmate came down the steps of each building to say the parting words, there was a solemn silence throughout the whole great crowd.

“Each time we stopped, I thought that *this* was the spot I hated most to leave,” breathed Florence, as, the Pilgrimage over, they wandered down College Avenue toward home. “The library, Wheeler Hall, Faculty Glade, the gym, the groves, and the Greek Theatre,—don’t you love them all?”

“Yes, our campus is *beautiful*,”—which meant a great deal, coming from Betty. “We must stop being sentimental now, Flo,” she added characteristically. “You have only an hour to eat lunch and get to the station to meet your home-folks.”

Greeting and entertaining the “home-folks” was one of the joys of Commencement Week. How proud and happy they all were to stroll about the campus which was theirs as well as

Florence's, to recall anecdotes and experiences of their own college days, to hear all she had to tell of the last wonderful year. And how comfortable it was to have Mother understand so well when Florence stole her away, only to find that she had already guessed the secret next her heart.

"I knew you would choose right, dear," she told her lovingly, "and long ago, I began to hope it might be Rob."

Florence was very quiet while she dressed for the Ball that night, but her eyes sparkled with unusual brightness, and her cheeks were suffused with a delicate flush that was vastly becoming. The bell rang.

"It's his same old ring!" laughed Betty, as she started toward the door, and stopped. "You go, Flo."

"No—no, he's your brother,—cousin," Florence protested nervously. "Besides, I'm not ready."

Betty smiled mischievously and bestowed a kiss on the flushed cheek as she hurried out. Florence patted and poked her already-perfect hair, pulled her dress, and then stood for a long

time contemplating the string of crystals that lay against her dress like dew-drops on a rose-petal.

"How silly you are!" she told the girl in the mirror, and resolutely turned toward the stairs. With an effort at indifference, she hummed a gay tune as she descended. Robert stood in the hall, talking with Betty and two of the other girls. Florence was glad. She gave him her hand, and smiled up at him frankly.

"You're browner than ever," she laughed. "You'll look like one of those desert Indians, pretty soon."

If it had been Louis or Ted, the response might have been, "And *you* are fairer than ever." But it was Rob.

"Gosh, but I'm glad to see you again!" was his greeting.

Charles' arrival cut short Rob's welcome, and, in a few moments, the four sped away toward the Senior Ball, just as they had planned to, long ago.

The evening passed like another beautiful dream, a vision of fresh young faces, lovely gowns, and perfect music. Every one seemed to radiate happiness and smiles. Thoughts might

drift to anticipations of the future, but not to the good-bys that must be said. To-night was to-night.

Rob found no moment to be alone with Florence that evening, and, when he called for her the next morning, she was arrayed in cap and gown, ready to take her place in the long line of graduates. He frowned with impatience, but, as he proudly escorted her to the campus that Commencement Day, the chimes burst forth as if in happy omen.

"There's a long, long trail a-winding into the land of my dreams," they played. He looked down at Florence, and found his answer in her smile.

"Only tell me that you are sure, Flo," he begged, very low, for there were crowds all about them. "Are you sure you can be happy poking among dusty ruins in the desert with me?"

"Quite sure, Rob," she said, as she took her place in line.

He could only press her hand and smile, but he was satisfied.

THE END

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